Attachment C

State of our City 2024 and Addendum

State of our city
2024

Noted by Council 25 November 2024

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

CITY OF SYDNEY

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Cover image: George Street transformation, city centre. Photo by Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acknowledgement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Sydney were extensively consulted more than a decade ago to inform Sustainable Sydney 2030 and this consultation continues today.

The First Peoples Dialogue Forum was an integral part of the community engagement process to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were influential in developing Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel was also briefed and invited to participate in workshops and forums.

The City of Sydney is committed to listening to, working with and elevating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the city. We acknowledge the harmful impact of colonisation and government policies is still impacting on the city's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It has led to intergenerational trauma and disadvantage in housing, education, health and wellbeing.

By addressing housing affordability, cost of living and gentrification, we will work to prevent further displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The City of Sydney understands that these past injustices affect us all as a nation and must be addressed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise that the British occupation of the shores of Warrane, Sydney Harbour which began in 1788 had far-reaching and devastating impacts on the Eora nation. Longstanding ways of life were disrupted by invasion and the Aboriginal peoples' Country, lands and waterways appropriated.

Today Sydney is of prime importance as an ongoing centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, cultures, traditions and histories.

Despite the destructive impact of this invasion, Aboriginal cultures have endured and are now globally recognised as one of the world's oldest living cultures. Aboriginal people have shown and continue to show, enormous resilience coupled with generosity of spirit towards other peoples with whom they now share their land.

The City of Sydney strives to reflect the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and supports their quest for self-determination. By understanding the harsh truth of our shared past, we are laying the groundwork for a future that embraces all Australians, a future based on genuine engagement, mutual respect and shared responsibility for our land.

The ongoing custodianship of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation is an essential part of this future, as is Sydney's continuing place as central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.

We are working to embed principles that acknowledge the continuing cultural connection to, and care for Country by Aboriginal peoples. The principles aim to provide a new way to think about our responsibilities to the land, to heal and nurture it for future generations.

There are many sites across our local area with historical and cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have documented many of these in Barani / Barrabugu (Yesterday / tomorrow), a free guide to Sydney's Aboriginal histories.

Image 1. Jeffrey St Wharf, Kirribilli (31 December 2021) Sydney New Year's Eve 2021 started with a traditional Smoking Ceremony performed by an Aboriginal Elder aboard the Tribal Warrior ship. (Photo by Matt Lambley/City of Sydney)

The City of Sydney works with and has achieved much with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel since 2008.These gains are consistent with the principles of cooperation signed between us and the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council in 2006. Here are some milestones:

2011 As part of the Eora journey project we committed to fund and install seven artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in public areas. It is part of our commitment to celebrate the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2015 We adopted an inaugural Innovate reconciliation action plan in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of our deep commitment to reconciliation.

2016 We adopted the 10-year Eora journey economic development plan.

2020 A stretch reconciliation action plan built on our success and extended our actions. It includes targets to increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, spending with businesses, cultural learning activities for all staff and major public works such as the harbour walk Yananurala and bara, an artwork and monument to the Eora people.

2024 We opened the local Aboriginal knowledge and culture centre at 119 Redfern Street, delivering another project from our Eora Journey commitments. This provides a place for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gather, share and support their needs.

Our actions and commitments will help to ensure the political, economic, social and cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are embedded in subsequent economic, social, environmental and cultural change.

Message from the Lord Mayor

Through the last term of Council we continued to achieve great outcomes for those who live, work and visit our City, now and in the future.

We also experienced significant challenges, including the rising cost of living, housing affordability, extreme weather events and the Covid-19 pandemic.

These challenges make our work, to create and support communities, incredibly important.

Breathing life back into the city post-Covid

We have come a long way since the pandemic devastated our businesses, particularly hospitality, retail, tourism and entertainment. The City's quick response with a Community Recovery Plan played a key role in mitigating the damage and supporting the economy and community which continued into this term, at a cost to the City of more than $149 million.

However, we know many of those sectors still continue to struggle including cultural and creative industries. The draft Economic Strategy 2025-2035, endorsed for public exhibition at the end of the term, charts a way forward for ongoing recovery, while championing a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences.

We have spent $2.1 billion over the last term supporting residents and local businesses including through grants, building capital works projects, maintaining community facilities and parks, and working with other levels of government and key stakeholders to help deliver more affordable and diverse housing than any other Council in Australia.

We also ran multiple series of successful Sydney Streets events, produced precinct activations like Neon Playground in Haymarket and Hollywood Quarter in Surry Hills, extended free outdoor dining to the end of 2025 with over 700 businesses trading on footpaths and roadways as part of the alfresco dining program.

Increased diverse and affordable housing

We continue to use every lever available to maximise the amount of affordable and diverse housing in our local area including through planning mechanisms such as developer contributions and planning agreements, selling discounted land to Community Housing Providers, and through grants from our Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund.

As a result, the City has contributed to 3,323 affordable homes in our area either built or anticipated in the future. The City's Affordable Housing levy scheme, which covers all of the Local Government Area since 2021, is projected to deliver a further 1,950 affordable dwellings.

This term we have collected levies, sold land at a discounted rate and approved grants to community housing providers totalling $73.4 million. That includes $60 million dollars collected in development levies that we provided to City West Housing and we approved over $7.4 million in discounted land sales, and cash grants of $6 million from our Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to not-for-profit Community Housing Providers.

We have met 71 per cent of our previous State Government set housing target within just 7 years of our 20-year goal, with over 21,000 dwellings built and over 19,000 in the pipeline. This term alone, the City has determined about 5,300 development applications and modification worth $8.5 billion.

In May, the NSW Government gave us a new housing target of around 18,900 new private homes to be completed by July 2029. We are committed to working with the NSW Government on a Local Housing Accord to ensure more opportunities for housing that deliver well-designed, sustainable homes and attractive neighbourhoods, as market conditions allow.

Continuing our Long Term Vision

Our ongoing achievements are the direct result of having a long term plan for the future as well as strong financial management and governance. We have consistently delivered debt free budgets that have received unqualified audits, which have allowed us to deliver on priorities while keeping rates among the lowest in the metropolitan area, with free rates for pensioners.

Emerging from the pandemic, in 2022 we adopted an update to our long-term strategic plan: Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The new plan builds on Sustainable Sydney 2030, which underpinned the City's work to create a greener, more connected, affordable and equitable city for over a decade.

The new plan has ten strategic directions that set a framework for action, ten targets to measure progress and future transformative projects we're already realising like increasing the supply of affordable housing and unlocking more green space at Moore Park Golf Course. The plan reinforces the community's priorities, extends targets and pushes us harder to ensure Sydney's liveability, sustainability and diversity now and into the future.

Climate action

Action on climate change remains a key priority. We committed in 2008 to reduce our emissions by 70% by 2030 and achieved that goal nine years early in 2021. Our operations are powered by 100% renewable electricity.

In an Australian-first, Council endorsed our Net Zero planning controls that require applications for new office buildings, hotels and shopping centres and major redevelopments to comply with minimum energy ratings and to achieve net zero by 2026 – ensuring buildings help the City reach our target of net zero emissions by 2035.

We enabled the foundation of a new climate innovation hub called Greenhouse, at 180 George Street, with a $7 million contribution to the building fit out and $22 million in rent abatement over the next decade.

We have established a food scraps recycling trial and are feeding our food scraps to maggots, whose manure can become protein-rich animal feed and fertiliser.

And our new Electric Vehicle strategy is lowering the barriers to EV use, with on-street chargers and work to support strata communities install chargers on site.

Our partnerships that focus on reducing emissions, water use and waste in building continued to deliver impressive results.

In 2021 we approved our new Urban Forest Strategy and Street Tree Master Plan to guide our work to create an even more cool, calm, and climate change-resilient city. Our ambitious Street Tree Master Plan received a prestigious award at the 2023 NSW Landscape Architecture Awards.

We planted 1,949 street trees, installed over 26,455 square metres of public domain landscaping and installed six new raingardens, and added over 185,000 new plants in our open spaces.

Because of our extensive planting, we are the only city in the country to increase our canopy cover over the past decade. Now we're readying to go even further – to plant more trees, plants and shrubbery, and make sure they are species that are hardy and resilient to our changing climate.

Street upgrades, parks and facilities

In the last 20 years, we've invested $474 million creating 36 new parks and open spaces, adding over 30.8 hectares of new open space and upgraded 143 neighbourhood parks. In the last term, these included the Drying Green in Green Square, Butterscotch Park and Honeykiss Way in Rosebery, Wimbo Park in Surry Hills, Lawrence Hargrave Reserve in Potts Point, and Peace Park in Chippendale.

We created four new sports fields at Gunyama Park in Zetland, Getiela Park and Perry Park in Alexandria, and at the Crescent in Annandale, using synthetic turf. These fields provide an extra 11,000 playing hours per year, achieving about 70 per cent of our target for sports and recreation needs by 2030.

After years of campaigning, the NSW Premier committed to converting up to 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course to publicly accessible parkland for the growing communities of Green Square, Waterloo, Zetland and Redfern, with funding allocated to progress planning. We called for the expanded parkland to be used for informal recreation with improved connectivity and no more parking.

We increased the budget for our community centres by 20 per cent, added more than 70 new programs and activities at our community centres and introduced fee waivers for eligible community groups using our venues. We are nearing completion of the $11 million upgrade to Pyrmont Community Centre and will soon reopen a refreshed Darlington Activity Centre.

We also approved $7.9 million plans to upgrade the Redfern/Darlington Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve, including to keep the basketball court in its place.

We successfully completed major upgrades of Macleay Street, Potts Point, Macdonald Street, Erskineville, and George Street South, the $34 million upgrade of Crown Street is moving at pace, and we have committed to a $44 million plan to rejuvenate Chinatown, which includes major public domain upgrades, support for businesses and more community events as well as grant funding and changes to planning controls.

This term work was also completed on George Street south and Devonshire Street in Surry Hills in August 2023. We are now pedestrianising George Street north from Hunter Street to Essex Street, which will be extended to Alfred Street later on when the NSW Government's Circular Quay Redevelopment project is completed.

We approved a major public domain upgrade for the Town Hall precinct, including the redevelopment of Sydney Square – the next obvious step in the transformation of George Street. We're also providing greener and calmer public spaces under the City North Public Domain Plan as the new metro stations and large development proposals bring more workers, residents and visitors.

We have delivered 25km of separated cycleways, over 66km of shared paths and 45km of other cycling infrastructure, more than doubling the number of bike trips in the city area since 2010 when counts began.

This term we completed cycling infrastructure on Portman Street, Zetland Avenue and the first section of Ngamuru Avenue in Green Square, Swanson, Macdonald, Ashmore, and Harley streets and Henderson Road, Railway Parade and Bridge Street in Erskineville, Huntley Street and Mitchell Road in Alexandria, Gadigal Avenue and Potter and Crystal Streets in Waterloo, Pitt Street North, King Street (between Pitt and Phillip streets) and College Street in central Sydney, and Booth Street in Glebe.

With four more cycling infrastructure projects currently under construction including Oxford and Liverpool cycleways, Castlereagh Street walking and cycling improvements, Ngamuru Avenue (between O'Riordan and Bourke Streets) and Glebe to Ultimo cycleway, five in detailed design and three in early planning stages - we remain committed to connecting the bike network.

This term Council also approved three key strategies and actions plans that underpin what the City will continue to do to create a city for walking, cycling and public transport including Electrification of Transport in the City - Strategy and Action Plan, the City Access Strategy and Action Plan and A City for Walking Strategy and Action Plan.

We began aligning the stars for Oxford Street's long-term success, with new planning controls that encourage investment and create more creative and cultural space, and the major redevelopment of City-owned properties. The new planning controls are complemented by the Oxford Street LGBTIQA+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy, a first in Australia for an LGBTIQA+ precinct.

Celebrating and supporting our First Nations peoples

In 2022, at a headland ceremony reminiscent of traditional Gadigal gatherings, First Nations dancers unveiled one of the city's most significant public artworks: bara, our Monument to the Eora, the first peoples of Sydney. Created by artist Judy Watson, bara represents the fish hooks crafted and used by Gadigal women for thousands of generations, the work has a gleaming finish reminiscent of local seashells.

We also began installing signage for Yananurala, a nine-kilometre walk that will highlight Aboriginal history and culture at places along the Harbour foreshore and opened the doors to our new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultural centre at 119 Redfern Street.

Supporting a creative city

In June 2022 we increased our stock of affordable creative space with the opening of our five-storey City of Sydney Creative Studios in Bathurst Street, leased from the developer Greenland for a peppercorn rent for 99 years. This state of the art facility provides affordable spaces to suit all kinds of artists, musicians, podcasters, performers and other creatives.

We have also begun to work to restore the historic Sydney Park brick kilns for cultural and community use and events.

In June this year we unanimously signed off on the closure of the Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014- 2024, with 97 per cent of the 208 actions commenced, underway or completed. The remaining three per cent are the sole responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Championing inclusion

This term we also created a new $4.5m food relief grant program to help organizations distribute food to struggling households as the cost-of-living soars. The first round of grants funded 21 community organisations who in turn support over 200 agencies providing the equivalent of 350,000 meals for food insecure people in our City. Through our Food Operations Working Group and a dedicated staff member, we help source over one tonne of fresh produce weekly so members also share resources, and connect to the broader food system to develop circular solutions.

We transitioned to flying the Progress Pride flag, a design that represents greater inclusion, embracing the breadth of identity within the LGBTIQA+ community and allocated more than $1.7 million in funding to support the marquee international pride event, WorldPride, in February and March 2023. We provided seed funding to Qtopia Sydney, the new home of Queer History and Culture, exhibitions, live performances, education programs, events and community programs, and funded free entry on Sundays.

In the face of increased violence at queer events and places, we hosted an LGBTIQA+ Safety Summit in conjunction with ACON, bringing together key stakeholders to create a path for a safe and inclusive city.

Delivering design excellence and planning for our future

The City has achieved greener, more humane, innovative and beautifully designed buildings and public domain areas through mechanisms such as our Design Excellence Policy and the competitive design process. More than 160 competitive processes have been completed since its inception over 24 years ago, with many developments acknowledged by local and international design and development industry awards.

This term we also continued to deliver the Green Square Urban Renewal area along with our $1.8 billion infrastructure plan and 40 parks, places and facilities planned. This is an example of density done well.

And in Central Sydney, we worked with developers to deliver not just impressive, sustainable office towers but also a network of retail lanes, public art and community facilities at the Quay Quarter Precinct, which includes Quay Quarter Tower, the world's largest upcycled tower building and 180 George Street which includes a 20-metre high canopy artwork by Aboriginal artist Daniel Boyd above the first new public plaza to be dedicated to the City in decades.

We also refurbished significant City-owned buildings like the Corporation Building in Haymarket and 343 George Street in the city centre.

During the term ahead we continue to engage with the community and businesses to refresh and update key strategies such as:

- Resilience Strategy 2023-2028 – how we plan to strengthen our community's ability to prepare for, withstand and adapt following major disruptions.
- A 'City for Walking' strategy and action plan – continuing the vision of the 12 actions we'll carry out to improve walking.
- Access Strategy and Action Plan – continuing the vision includes 17 projects, initiatives and programs that translates the strategy into an action plan to manage access and transport to support environmental, social and economic outcomes.
- Electrification of Transport in the City – Strategy and Action Plan that outlines our approach to achieving zero emissions transport by 2035.
- Greening Sydney Strategy – how we will be a cool, calm and resilient city, and how we will increase greening and share its benefits with the entire community.
- Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 – currently under development. Embedded in this strategy is our priority to transition to a green and circular economy.
- Cultural Strategy 2025-2035 – currently under development to show how we plan to support Sydney's creative industries through both current challenges and future ambitions.

I look forward to working with our new council to meet the challenges that lie ahead for our city and our many communities. I thank our dedicated City staff, under the wonderful leadership of Chief Executive Officer Monica Barone, who have risen to the many serious challenges over recent years, ensuring our city not only survived Covid 19 but is thriving once more.

Lord Mayor

Clover Moore

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

This Council term saw the need for us to continue to adapt and respond to the impacts of the pandemic and weather events. We tailored our services and programs to provide the best services we could during this period.

As pandemic restrictions began to lift across our city in 2021 the council focussed on encouraging reconnection and helping those impacted by the rising cost of living. We did that through many ways such as providing community emergency quick response grants and food relief donations to OzHarvest, Foodbank and SecondBite.

While visitation to our city is rising, small businesses in our area and vulnerable communities face increasing challenges from the rising cost of living and housing crisis.

Through our programs, since July 2021 we have assisted 550 people to exit homelessness into long term housing and prevented another 490 people from becoming homeless. In 2023/24 we provided $1,349,590 in grants to support 4 specialist homelessness services in the Inner City area. To help with the supply of affordable housing, the City joined with Common Equity NSW in Sydney's first dedicated affordable housing project for transgender women. Through our excess land program, seven properties in Darlinghurst were sold in March 2024, at a significant discount to get this project started.

Our event and festival programming continued to focus on encouraging reconnection in the community and supporting local businesses. We have sponsored and supported many events and festivals bringing people together and back to our city including Sydney WorldPride in late summer 2023, our ongoing successful Sydney Streets program which commenced in 2021/22, Sydney Fringe Festival, Sydney Festival, Sydney Writers' Festival, Sydney Film Festival, Vogue American Express Fashion Night Out, Biennale of Sydney, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, Yabun Festival, Australia Day in Sydney, Vivid's XCelerate live music program, Australian Fashion Week, SXSW Sydney and a community event as part of the 50th anniversary of the Sydney Opera House in 2023.

Additionally we supported and hosted many cultural events celebrating the diversity of our community with highlights such as our Lunar Festival, Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day, Reconciliation Week events, Australian sports program events engaging newly arrived people to learn about Australian culture through sport, Refugee Week ambassador speaker events, a community event with the Aboriginal Medical Service to celebrate NAIDOC Week, and Aboriginal Star Stories of the Dreaming event in Green Square Amphitheatre.

Overall visitor numbers to our aquatic and leisure centres, libraries and sports field are returning to pre-pandemic levels. It's encouraging to see visitors at our aquatic and leisure centres have increased again in 2023/24, reaching 1.99 million, an 11.1% increase from the previous year. Library attendances also increased, with 2023/24 seeing an 18% increase in attendance from the previous year.

We continue to make progress towards making our operations more sustainable including deploying our first fully electric commercial vehicle, installing solar PV panels at Perry Park bringing the total on City of Sydney rooftops to about 2,300 kW and generating over 3,000 MWh of clean energy a year, taking part in programs to include crushed recycled glass and other recycled products into road building, working closely with Ausgrid to complete the change-over of Ausgrid-owned residential street lighting to energy-efficient LEDs. Over 3,000 light fittings have been upgraded to LED, reducing the City's electrical consumption by approximately 750 MWh a year, representing 2.5% of the City's grid electricity use.

On average more than 72,000 plants were planted in City of Sydney parks and street gardens each year between 2021/22 and 2024/25 with key planting sites being Hyde Park, Cook and Phillip Park, Jubilee Park, Gunyama Park and Sydney Park, and in Green Square, Paddington and Woolloomooloo.

We completed the George Street south pedestrianisation and received the Built Projects – City and Regional Scale Award for its transformation of George Street.

Other highlights from our activities include:

- creating the new Getiela synthetic sports field at Alexandria while increasing the area of parks and open space managed by the City of Sydney to more than 215ha
- completing construction of separated cycleway upgrades in Annandale and new cycleways in the city, Green Square, Waterloo and Erskineville that expands the bike network by 4.8km since July 2021
- rejuvenating the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park
- completing a 3-year, staged 5,000m² road reconstruction in O'Dea Avenue to replace concrete road with sustainable asphalt while reducing traffic noise
- opening our Ultimo Recycling Pop-Up at Bay Street Depot for residents to walk up and recycle items with the most popular being electronics, batteries and light bulbs and upgrading our recycling stations by adding an extra stream for small electronics and increasing the number of stations to 16 locations
- launching our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy
- consulting and adopting our urban forest strategy, street tree master plan, tree management policy and electrification of transport in the city strategy and action plan
- adopting our resilience and walking strategies, and working on our, cultural and economic development strategies to revitalise the city centre, transition to a green and circular economy, build an innovation economy and strengthen the inclusive economy

The City continues to strive to be a leader in equal employment, diversity and inclusion by providing employees with benefits such as care and culture leave, and workplace flexibility. I am proud to lead an organisation which was reaccredited as a Disability Confident Recruiter for a third successive year and to be awarded the 2024 Local Government Professionals Australia (NSW) Excellence Award for Organisational Diversity and Inclusion for our Employee Networks.

I wish to acknowledge the great work that all of our committed staff perform each day across our local government area, whether it is our front line or support services, to support our growing community of residents, workers, visitors and businesses.

P. M. Barone

Chief Executive Officer

Monica Barone

Introduction

This State of our city report focuses on how effective the City has been in delivering social, environmental, economic and civic leadership objectives over the term of the previous council. It reports against the high-level strategies and priorities of our Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 and has a community focus.

Our Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050

Our Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 sets directions for our city that respond to our communities' vision for a more sustainable future. The plan positions our city as a regional leader for just and sustainable growth, creativity and innovation and it sets clear directions to help tackle the climate emergency. It builds on the sustained conversations with local communities that began in 2006/07.

Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision continues our vision for a more sustainable future. Ten targets enable change to be measured over time. Six guiding principles that consider the values expressed by the community inform the City of Sydney in its decision-making.

Ten strategic directions provide a framework for action to be taken by the City of Sydney, other levels of government, civil society and by communities. Ten project ideas building on past projects have been developed. These ambitious ideas illustrate ways the vision for the city could be realised by 2050.

In developing the community strategic plan, we gathered the perspectives of people with an interest in the city and its future – workers, visitors, business owners and residents, including younger people, through a comprehensive engagement program that began in 2019.

We continued to monitor community concerns, ideas and aspirations throughout the pandemic to see if, or how, perspectives might have changed. We have also taken stock of the impact the pandemic has had on our communities and economy since its emergence in early 2020.

Legislative requirements

The City of Sydney is a local government organisation governed by the requirements of the *Local Government Act (1993)* and Regulations, the *City of Sydney Act (1988)* and other relevant legislative provisions.

The Local Government Act includes principles for local government, which identify the matters councils need to consider when carrying out their responsibilities. Integrated planning and reporting is included as one of the principles.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework provides for each council to identify the priorities of its many communities and create a holistic approach to planning to achieve those goals in a sustainable way, given the resources available. The NSW Government's framework, introduced in 2009, applies to all councils in the state.

Using this framework, the City has prepared a number of plans which detail how we intend to deliver on the communities' priorities identified through consultation and engagement and articulated in the community strategic plan.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework provides the mechanism for the implementation of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision through the Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 (also referred to in this document as the community strategic plan) and other key documents.

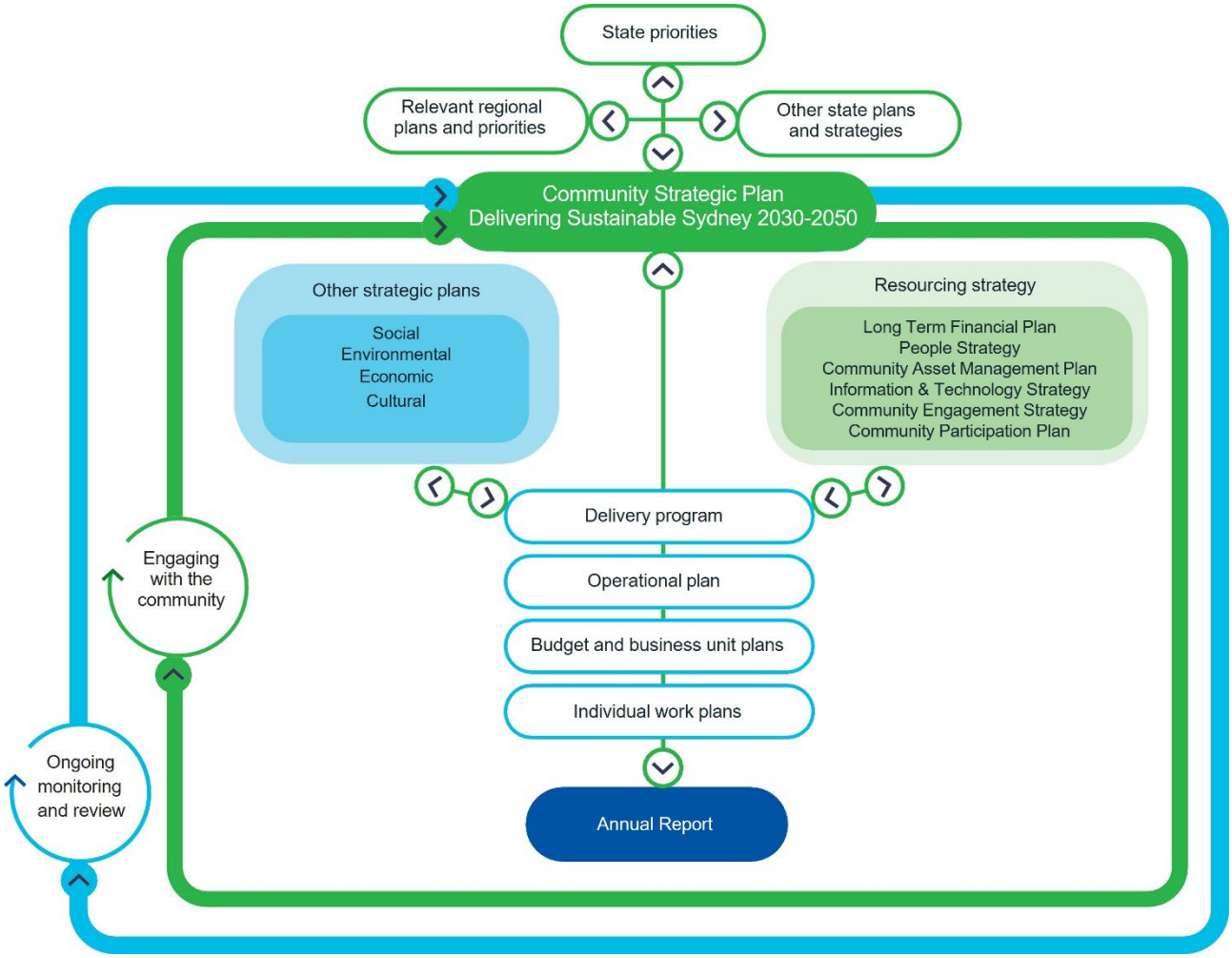


Figure 1. The City's Integrated planning and reporting framework diagram adapted from the Office of Local Government. In the above framework the State of our city report comprises part of the annual reporting process in the year of a council election, and the document will be appended to the City's annual report.

The Council

The City of Sydney and all other councils in NSW operate within a legislative framework determined by the state government.

Councillors are usually elected for a 4-year term by residents and non-residents. However, due to the 2020 election being postponed, the most recent Council term was only 2 years and 9 months. At the City of Sydney, the Lord Mayor is popularly elected. The Deputy Lord Mayor is elected by the councillors each year. All councillors represent the entire area as the City of Sydney is not divided into wards.

The primary role of a councillor is to make informed decisions and develop policies that guide our activities. Councillors provide leadership and guidance and facilitate communication between the Council as a governing body and our communities. Councillors discuss matters at council committees and make decisions at council meetings. Members of the public can address committee meetings and may also attend council meetings.

We consult our communities regularly to seek the opinions of residents, business owners and other interested parties to ensure they play a role in the decision-making process.

Image 2. City of Sydney councillors as at September 2024 (in order of left to right) Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore, Councillor Lyndon Gannon, Councillor Shauna Jarrett, Deputy Lord Mayor – Councillor Robert Kok, Lord Mayor – Councillor Clover Moore AO, Councillor (Waskam) Emelda Davis, Councillor Adam Worling, Councillor HY William Chan, Councillor Linda Scott, Councillor Yvonne Weldon AM.

How we measure progress

Our Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 outlines 10 targets to measure progress.

Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 10 targets

	Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 targets	Progress
	By 2035 we will achieve net zero emissions in the City of Sydney local area	As at June 2023, annual greenhouse gas emissions were 3,429 tonnes C02-e, a decrease of 41% across the local government area, based on 2006 levels.
	By 2050 there will be a minimum overall green cover of 40%, including 27% tree canopy cover	Total canopy cover of the local government area has increased from 15.5% in 2008 to 20.9% in 2024. In our area 33.2% was green cover.
	By 2030 residential potable water use will be reduced to 170 litres a person a day in the City of Sydney local area Non-residential potable water use will be reduced by 10% (measured per square metre) from 2018/19 levels	In 2022/23, each person in the City of Sydney local area used 221 litres of water each day. Non-residential potable water use has decreased 29% from the 2019 baseline.
	By 2030 there will be a 15% reduction in waste generated by each person based on 2015 levels And by 2030 there will be 90% recycling and recovery of residential waste, commercial and industrial waste, and construction and demolition waste, which will be maintained at that level to 2050	In 2023/24 there was an 18% reduction in the amount of residential waste collected per capita from the 2015 baseline. 50% of residential waste from our local area was diverted from landfill in 2023/24. Results for diversion of waste from landfill for commercial and industrial businesses and construction and demolition projects in our local area are derived from NSW EPA data for the whole state and a study completed in 2021. We estimate 47% of commercial and industrial waste is being diverted from landfill (data from 2021 study of local area). 78% of construction and demolition waste in our local area was diverted from landfill in 2022/23 (NSW EPA data for the state).

	Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 targets	Progress
	By 2036 there will be approximately 700,000 jobs in the City of Sydney local area including 200,000 new jobs compared to 2017. An increased proportion of all jobs will be secure jobs	There were 519,839 jobs in the local area at last count in 2022. This is an increase of 18,000 jobs between 2017 and 2022. Growth was strongest in the finance and financial services sector.
	By 2036 there will be at least 156,000 private dwellings and 17,500 non-private dwellings that include boarding houses and student accommodation Of the private dwellings, 7.5% will be social housing and 7.5% will be affordable housing with this proportion maintained into the future	As at June 2024, in the local area there were: – 124,010 private dwellings representing 79.5% of the private dwelling target for 2036. This is a net increase of 1,287 between June 2023 and June 2024, – 16,366 non-private dwellings (boarding house rooms, student accommodation rooms, residential care services), or 93.5% of the non-private dwelling target for 2036, – an estimated 9,580 social housing dwellings, representing 7.7 per cent of private dwellings, – 1,447 built affordable and diverse housing dwellings, representing 1.2% of private dwellings, – 556 affordable and diverse housing dwellings in the development pipeline, and – a further 1,385 affordable and diverse housing dwellings that are in the pre-application stage. The City's LGA wide affordable housing levy came into effect in July 2021. The City's levy scheme is projected to deliver an additional 1,950 affordable dwellings. If considered all together, the built, pipeline, expected and projected number of affordable and diverse housing dwellings is expected to exceed 5,200 by 2036. This equates to roughly 44 percent of the 12,000 affordable dwellings target for 2036, or about 3.4 percent of the private dwellings target for 2036.

	Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 targets	Progress
	By 2036 there will be at least 40,000m² of new cultural production floor space in the City of Sydney local area compared to 2017	Between 2017 and 2022, the city's creative floor space decreased by 63,992m² from 1,212,900m² to 1,148,908m². The next release of data will be available when the City of Sydney Floorspace and Employment Survey is undertaken in 2026/27.
	By 2050 people will use public transport, walk or cycle to travel to and from work. This includes 9 out of 10 people working in the city centre and 2 out of 3 people working in the rest of the local area	At the time of the 2021 Census, the proportion of workers who used public transport, walked or cycled to come to work in our area was 51.4%. (70.4% in 2011, 74.0% in 2016). The 2021 Census was conducted during a lockdown where many people worked from home and the result of 51.4% using public transport / cycling / walking is not an accurate representation of the longer term trends of public and active transport use. However, NSW government data shows trips on public transport in the Sydney CBD increased from an average of 12 million in June 2021 to 22 million in June 2024.
	By 2030 every resident will be around a 10-minute walk to what they need for daily life	As at June 2022 the following proportions of residents lived within a 10-minute walk (800 metres) of the following services: - fresh food – 99.95%, - childcare – 99.38%, - health – 100%, - leisure – 99.97%, - social – 99.94%, - learning – 99.3%, - cultural – 97.5% - public open space – 100%.

	Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 targets	Progress
	By 2050 community cohesion and social interaction will have increased This is based on at least 75% of the local resident population feeling part of the community, agreeing most people can be trusted and believing that when needed they can get help from their neighbours	The 2023 wellbeing indicators showed that: – 72% of those surveyed believed that most people can be trusted. That was unchanged from 2018, up from the baseline of 67% in 2011 but slightly lower than the 2015 result of 75%. – 46% of those surveyed felt satisfied with feeling part of the community. This is slightly higher than the 2018 result of 44%, but a little lower than the 49% baseline in 2011. – 53% of those surveyed say they can 'definitely' or 'sometimes' get help from their neighbours when needed, which is higher than the 2018 results of 50%, but lower than the 2011 baseline of 55%. This is in contrast to 72% of those surveyed saying they are definitely willing to help their neighbours.

Ten Strategic directions

Strategic Direction 1
Responsible governance and stewardship

Our organisation evolves to provide governance and leadership for the city and communities.

Strategic Direction 2
A leading environmental performer

The city is part of a decarbonised world. Our communities live in a city that is regenerative and makes a positive contribution to the planet, to society and to individual lives. We are innovative leaders in climate change adaptation and innovation.

Strategic Direction 3
Public places for all

The city has more places for people who live, work, invest and visit here. The history of the city and connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is evident in our public places. The city centre is an inviting and lively place, clean and safe, day and night, and with creativity and public art at its heart. Our local main streets are thriving hubs with their own distinctive characters.

Strategic Direction 4
Design excellence and sustainable development

The city will continue to grow sustainably and with good design. Communities are inclusive, socially connected, healthy, and live in walkable well-serviced neighbourhoods, supported by public transport. We take the impact of our changing climate into account in the policies that influence development in the city.

Strategic Direction 5
A city for walking, cycling and public transport

The city is greener and calmer, with more space for people on the streets – including footpaths and cycleways. More people choose to walk, ride and use public transport. All vehicles in the city are zero emissions.

Strategic Direction 6
An equitable and inclusive city

Everyone feels welcome and can afford to live here if they choose. Everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential in a city that is fair and just.

Strategic Direction 7
Resilient and diverse communities

The city and its public places and infrastructure can withstand impacts from a changing climate and emergency situations. We work with communities, businesses, and other organisations to strengthen connections and networks, to prepare the city and be able to recover from most situations.

Strategic Direction 8
A thriving cultural and creative life

We are proud of the city. We are all able to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the city's cultural life.

Strategic Direction 9
A transformed and innovative economy

The city maintains its position locally, nationally, and internationally as a destination for business, investment, and talent. Innovation is central to the economy and transformation has occurred across all industries. Wealth and benefits are shared equitably.

Strategic Direction 10
Housing for all

This is a city where everyone has a home. Social, affordable, and supported housing is available for those who need it. High-quality housing is available for everyone.

Strategic Direction 1 – Responsible governance and stewardship

2050 Outcome:

Our organisation continues to evolve to provide governance and leadership for the city and communities.

Good governance results in public trust and confidence in the leadership of our city and better outcomes for the community. Our community relies on us to represent their collective interests and to facilitate their participation in decision making.

The City of Sydney engaged with communities extensively to develop Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050–Continuing the Vision. The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework provides the mechanism for the implementation of this Vision through the Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 (adopted by Council in June 2022), and other key documents.

Our community engagement strategy acknowledges that community participation is a guiding principle of effective and accountable local government. It provides a framework for how we engage communities in the decisions made at the City of Sydney. It outlines the legislative requirements, guiding principles, approaches and processes we use to ensure our engagement is clear, accountable, meaningful, inclusive and accessible. It describes the role communities play in our decisions about projects, policies, strategies, programs and services.

We continue to monitor community concerns, ideas and aspirations through our ongoing engagement on major strategies and projects including environmental, resilience, cultural and economic strategies and initiatives to create more public space and cycleways in the city.

The City of Sydney's Long Term Financial Plan demonstrates that we have the financial capacity to progress the significant initiatives of the Delivery Program and provides an ongoing prudent financial budgeting framework to facilitate future decision-making. Our recent strong financial position has been built upon a diverse income base, significant business rate income and our commitment to control and deliver services, facilities and infrastructure that are both effective and efficient.

We remain in a strong financial position in the face of some economic uncertainty, which can be attributed to sound financial management over the preceding years. This enables the ongoing transformation of the urban environment and the ability to respond to emerging issues like food insecurity in order to meet the needs of residents and workers alike.

Highlights

- We are a member of global networks – C40 Cities and the Resilient Cities Network. The City of Sydney hosts the Resilient Sydney office on behalf of all 33 metropolitan Sydney councils. In June 2023, a new three-year contract with the potential to extend to 7 years was confirmed for the Resilient Sydney Platform, supporting a longer-term approach to sharing data and knowledge across Sydney to support collaborations between councils and with the NSW Government focussed on urban heat, urban greening, resilient places, affordable housing policy and net zero planning. The City of Sydney's own local Resilience Strategy 2023-2028 was adopted by Council in December 2023.
- We implemented City Connect which delivered a refreshed and enhanced online dashboard for community members to make, manage, and track their requests with us. The solution comprised 3 integrated projects: City Connect online services portal and dashboard, smart digital forms and a new customer relationship management tool – One CRM. Together they increase our online services from 30 to 84, allowing people to lodge and track their requests The project won a Sydney Design Awards gold award for digital government services and recognised as the NSW Customer Experience Initiative of the Year – Digital Transformation at the Auscontact Excellence Awards.
- We implemented a refreshed purpose and values for our staff, providing a current reflection the feedback from our workforce in how they wish to interact and care for our community. In June 2024 we won the Local Government Professionals, NSW award for Organisational Diversity and Inclusion. The award acknowledges how our employee networks support diversity and inclusion and strengthen relationships between colleagues.
- We developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy as a commitment of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. The strategy aims to make the City of Sydney a workplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel welcome and encouraged to apply for roles and access employment opportunities. It aims to increase retention and promotion of employees and create a culturally aware, skilled and respectful workplace
- Our work to deliver effective governance is ongoing. We continually refine and enhance the City's compliance practices and we have implemented a new risk management system, updated our risk management framework and a new compliance management procedure. Additionally, our safety management system was externally audited and found to be effectively meeting WHS legislation and operating efficiently.
- Audit activities continue and a new strategic audit plan has been developed together with regular Audit Risk and Compliance Committee meetings.
- The City of Sydney's Annual Financial statements for 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years received unqualified audit opinions from the Audit Office of NSW with the 2023/24 being completed at the time of this report.

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 1.1 The City of Sydney provides effective governance and leadership

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Decision making is informed by specialist advice: number and breadth of Advisory Panels, Committees and Working Groups established by Council	The City of Sydney has established community and sector advisory panels, committees and working groups to provide ongoing, specialist advice on complex issues affecting specific communities or areas of expertise. These advisory panels are critical to implementing our long-term strategic vision and also addressing key challenges such as recovery from the pandemic. They include: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel, the Inclusion (Disability) advisory panel, the Multicultural advisory panel, the Housing for all working group, the Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery advisory panel, the Creative and Cultural Sector Recovery advisory panel, the Design advisory panel, the Public Art advisory panel and the Cycling advisory committee.

Objective 1.2 The City of Sydney has the capacity, capability, information, data and systems to serve the community into the future

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Proactive release of information and data, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported annually * Closing the Gap priority reform four	In 2023/24 the total number of open data products on the City of Sydney data hub is 175. This includes an Indigenous business interactive map along with a capture tool to crowd-source Indigenous businesses which was published in 2022/23. In 2023/24 the City of Sydney website was used by 2,257,434 users, for 3,700,594 sessions, and 7,155,682 page views. Since 2021 more than 27,000 new items were published to the Archives & History Resources Catalogue now with approximately 997,000 items. During this period curated collections were compiled to support easier access, including about First Nations, World War I and II, the Liberate! exhibition (LGBTIQA+ for Sydney World Pride), coronations, cycling and entertainment venues, markets, and significant City streets such as Liverpool Street Darlinghurst, King Street Newtown and Crown Street.

Indicator	Comment / Performance
A new Community Wellbeing Indicator is proposed to be included the next and ongoing surveys to measure cultural safety * Closing the Gap priority reform three	For the 2015 and 2018 City of Sydney Wellbeing surveys, the response rate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was low. We undertook targeted engagement to increase the number of responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the most recent 2023 survey, resulting in a 39% increase for 2023. In the 2023 Wellbeing Survey almost 85% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they had experienced racism in the preceding 12 months. We will partner with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander panel and consult with the community for advice on the most appropriate way to proceed to measure cultural safety.

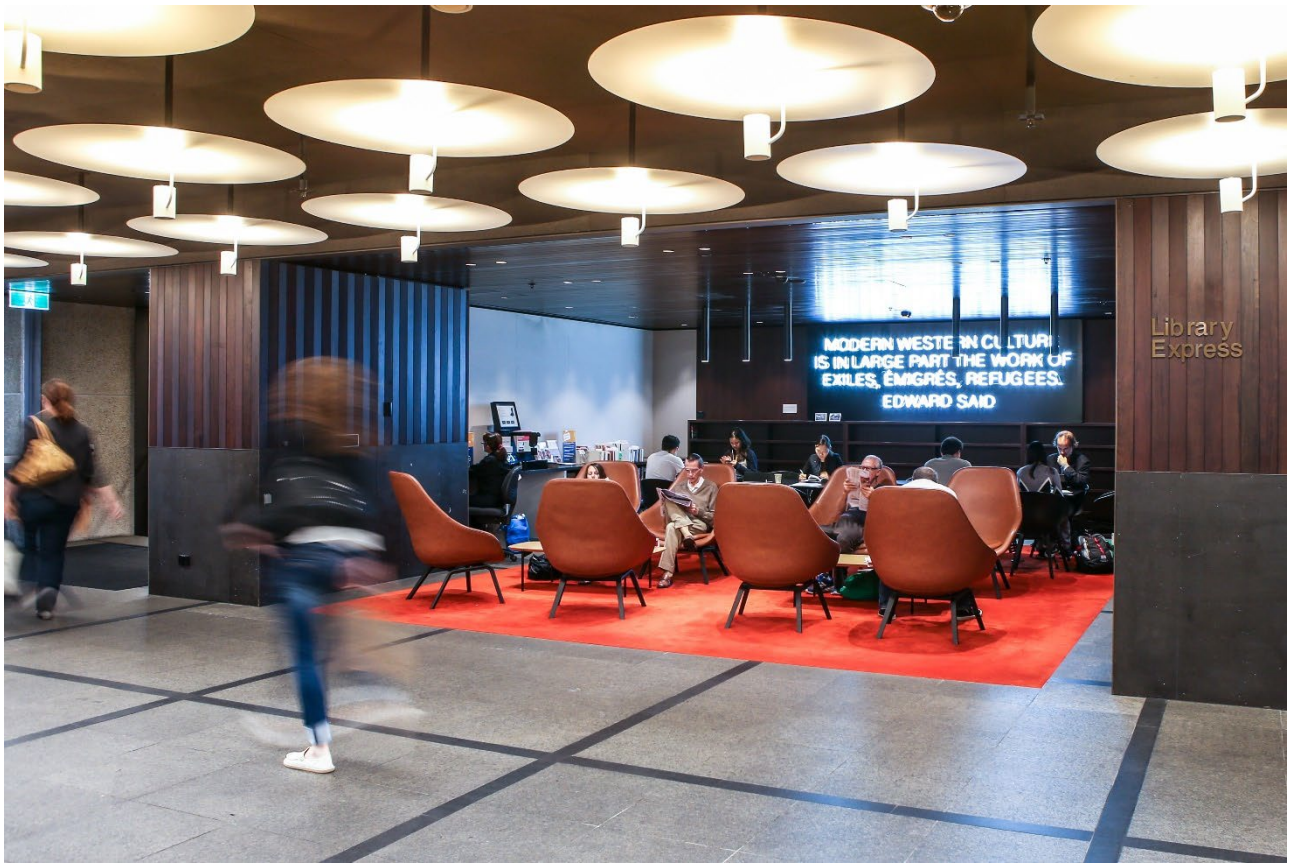
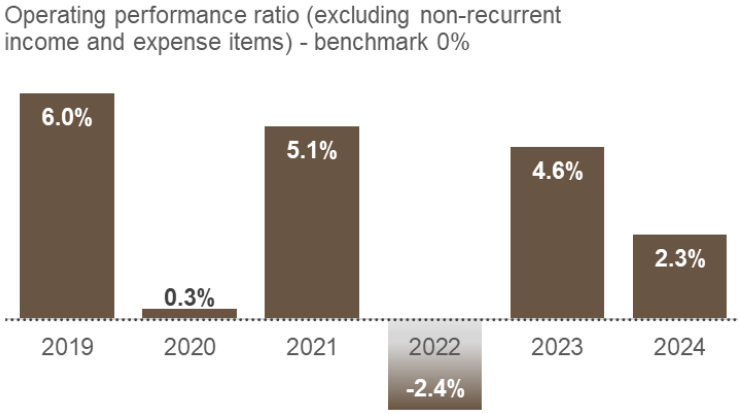
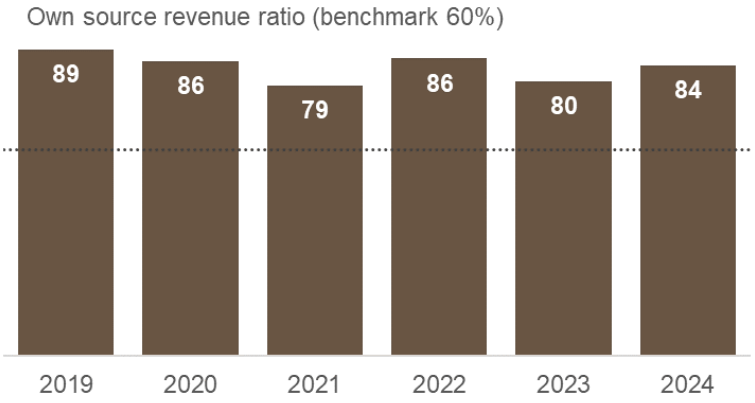
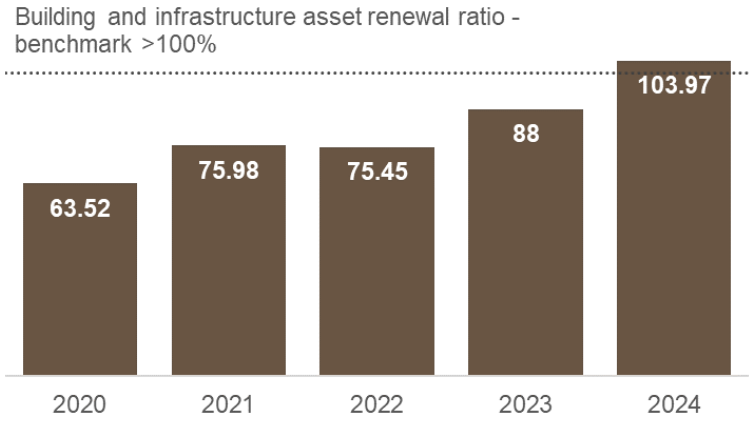


Image 3. Town Hall Library Express, located in Town Hall House. Photo by Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Objective 1.3 The City of Sydney is financially sustainable over the long-term

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Operating Performance Ratio: Benchmark >1 Own Source Revenue Ratio: Benchmark >60% Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio: Benchmark >100%	The operating performance ratio includes operating expense adjustments for a one-off land tax cost and one-off expenses arising from capital construction projects. Above-benchmark performance reflects an improved operating result in 2023/24, driven by a continued improvement in operating and interest income and contained expenditure increases.  The Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio results reflect a continued high level of own source revenue and perform well above the benchmark. Underlying operating revenues remain largely consistent with (or higher). However, a decrease in capital income received via developer contributions for 2023/24 relative to 2022/23 meant that 'Own Source' revenue increased as a proportion of Continuing Operating Revenue, compared with the prior year. 

Indicator	Comment / Performance
	The Building and Infrastructure Renewals Ratio assesses the rate at which these assets are being renewed relative to required renewal levels that reflect projections included in the Asset Management Plan (part of the Resourcing Strategy). On this enhanced indicator, Council's renewal expenditure exceeded the annual 'required' level for 2023/24. Performance trends for the alternative ration reflect ratio 1 above, as a result of improved capital renewal works delivery over time. 

Objective 1.4 The City of Sydney is an active contributor to the governance of metropolitan Sydney

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Summary of projects and outcomes as reported every six months	We continue to make submissions to the NSW and Federal Governments on a wide range of matters impacting the city, our workers, visitors and residents. Submissions covered topics ranging from rental affordability and homelessness, planning and climate change, electric and hybrid vehicles, arts and creative industries, the National Construction Code, feedback on state significant developments, biosecurity and food safety, State government rezoning proposals, liquor licensing reform, the Office of Local Government's procurement guidelines, freight policy reform and the NSW visitor economy strategy 2030.

Objective 1.5 The transformation of the city is enabled by successful partnerships and collaboration

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Formal and informal partnerships as reported in the annual report	We continued to engage with a wide range of local, regional, state and national partners to ensure shared objectives are achieved. Key sector partnerships and collaborative relationships include: - World Cities Culture Forum - Better buildings partnership - Sustainable Destination partnership - Tech Central Alliance - Resilient Sydney - Cityswitch - Council of Capital City Lord Mayors - Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) - Local Government NSW - Australian Local Government Association, and - Community housing providers. - C40 Cities More detail on our partnerships can be found in our Annual Report – Statutory Returns.

Future challenges

Our society is facing social and cultural changes that impact our local communities. We recognise that diverse and innovative public engagement processes will help us understand the needs and expectations of our residents, businesses, workers, students and visitors to address these challenges thoughtfully.

We recognise that engaged communities together with connected organisations provide better opportunities to deal with the shocks and stresses of the future and as a result we recognise the value of partnering and working together with key agencies and all levels of government.

The City of Sydney, like all local councils, faces financial sustainability challenges. Growing demand for infrastructure and services amidst a period of extended period of high inflation has resulted in significant economic and financial hardship for many of the City of Sydney’s businesses and residents.

Strategic Direction 2 – A leading environmental performer

2050 Outcome:

The city is part of a decarbonised world. Our communities live in a city that is regenerative and makes a positive contribution to the planet, to society and to individual lives. We are innovative leaders in climate change adaptation and innovation.

Significant global climate records have been broken recently. We know every fraction of a degree makes a difference. This is why we set a net zero target for the local area on 2035 and continue to take serious action in our own operations.

While the City of Sydney can't tackle the climate crisis alone, we can lead and encourage others to do the same. Our programs, grants and partnerships support building owners, residents and businesses to improve energy efficiency and switch to renewable energy. We actively support and campaign for zero emissions transport, buildings and energy supplies. In our local area we encourage the use of transport with no emissions, or reduced emissions.

In our own operations we measure, reduce and offset our operational greenhouse gas emissions.

We monitor our energy consumption to identify ways we can reduce energy use and emissions. Each year we prepare a detailed emissions inventory and verify it independently to ensure accuracy. Our emissions and activities are reported yearly in Climate Active public disclosure statements and our annual environmental report.

We achieve energy and emissions savings in our buildings, plant and equipment, and public lighting through efficiency upgrades and electrification and we're transitioning our parks maintenance equipment to electric options.

We're starting to focus on carbon intensive materials in our roads and buildings. We prioritise renovating and reusing structures rather than demolishing them. We consider options to reduce the amount of concrete we use and choose low carbon concrete where available. We continue to include recycled content in our asphalt.

Our travel policy requires employees to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport for work trips. Employees use our fleet of e-bikes, e-cargo bikes and pedal bikes at Town Hall House and Alexandra Canal Depot. We offer training to build confidence and improve safety.

We've installed more than 2 megawatts of solar panels, supplying electricity directly where it's used. We purchase 100% renewable electricity through a power purchase agreement. We offset unavoidable emissions, increasingly purchasing from quality Australian projects. These projects also support regional initiatives, ecosystem regeneration and biodiversity.

To improve the sustainability of our local area, we support strata communities, commercial building owners and tenants, and accommodation, entertainment and cultural venues. Together we partner to achieve our environmental targets and move towards net zero by 2035.

Our long-term waste objectives for our local area are to reduce waste, reuse and recycle as much as possible while retaining a material's highest value and treat what is left over in the most sustainable way.

Highlights

Our Operations

Our operational emissions have fallen by 76% from our baseline year of 2006. Since July 2020 we buy 100% renewable electricity from 2 wind farms and one solar farm in regional NSW.

We're electrifying our plant and equipment. This includes installing heat pumps, converting gas hot water units to heat pumps or electric storage tanks and transitioning more of our vehicles to electric. We're reducing the use of our cogeneration and trigeneration systems. We'll use lower global warming potential refrigerants in our heating and cooling systems where available, and all our new buildings will be fully electric with no new fossil fuel connections. Over 15% of our vehicle fleet is now electric.

Most of the street lighting in our area now uses LED lighting, following a major 5-year project between the City of Sydney and Ausgrid to upgrade lighting. Public lighting is one of highest uses of electricity for councils, so this project has been important in targeting energy use and reducing our operational costs.

Our 20 park-scale water recycling systems supplied around 53 megalitres of recycled water for park irrigation in 2023/24. This is a capacity increase of 8% on the previous year and enough to meet 81% of irrigation demand for the parks supplied by these systems.

Through improved water use monitoring we identified and fixed leaks faster in toilets, taps, and pipes. In 2022/23 we upgraded park water harvesting and recycling systems. Water saving was a focus of the restoration works on the Archibald Memorial Fountain in Hyde Park. The upgrades reduced water use by 50% compared to the 2019/20 baseline.

We installed food waste dehydrators at 3 of our biggest sites. The dehydrators convert food waste into a soil conditioner we use in our parks, creating a circular solution. This project reduces waste to landfill, avoids future methane emissions from food decomposing in landfill, adds nutrients to the soil, and reduces the amount of water needed to keep the park green.

From April 2023 to June 2024 we trialled a uniform recycling program with our cleansing and parks teams, by sending their old uniforms to an Australian textile recovery company. Non-branded garments in good condition were donated to a charity for reuse. Items with logos or in poor condition were recycled into infill fibre for pet bedding, furniture and insulation. By the end of the trial more than 500kg of uniforms were collected for reuse or recycling.

In the community

Since 2008/09 our parks and open spaces have increased from 188 to 217 hectares.

In 2021, we approved our new Urban Forest Strategy and Street Tree Master Plan to guide our work to create an even more cool, calm, and climate change-resilient city. Our ambitious Street Tree Master Plan received a prestigious award at the 2023 NSW Landscape Architecture Awards.

Since 2008, our canopy cover has increased from 15.5% to 20.9%. This increase has occurred across the streets, parks and property, showing stakeholders are working together to create a green, cool and calm city.

The new Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub near Circular Quay has brought together innovators, investors, climate action groups, academics and corporates to find solutions to our climate problems. The hub accommodates more than 400 people dedicated to climate action with coworking space, event spaces and meeting rooms. It is supported by a City of Sydney $31 million accommodation grant. This 10-year rental subsidy will assist emerging climate-tech businesses to grow and bring their big ideas to market.

Our sustainability partnerships and programs are supporting building owners progress toward net zero emissions. The Sustainable Destination Partnership has achieved a 24 per cent reduction in carbon emissions and water consumption from a 2017/18 baseline. The Better Buildings Partnership has achieved a 95% stationary emissions intensity reduction since 2005/06 and procured 92% of its base building electricity from renewables in 2023/24. Its best practice toolkit on circular office fit-out has been released along with a Creating Resilient Communities guide.

Through CitySwitch, 80% of tenancies in Sydney have switched to renewable electricity and the average NABERS energy rating is 5 stars for these buildings. The Renewables for Business Masterclass series resources have been published and shared across government and industry. The Smart Green Apartments program has encouraged owners corporations to invest $4,299,834 in upgrades, delivering significant savings across their lifespan, including saving $11,224,423 in running costs and avoiding 61,488 tonnes of carbon emissions. Our landfill diversion rate has declined since 2018. This is caused by continued high use of red lid bins by residents, and NSW EPA legislative changes in 2019 which meant our waste service provider was no longer able to convert organic material from red lid bins into a land remediation product. To address this shortfall, since 2019 we've increased the number of services and materials we can accept for recycling to make it easier for our residents to avoid putting waste in the red lid bin. We've also stepped up our advocacy at a state and federal level.

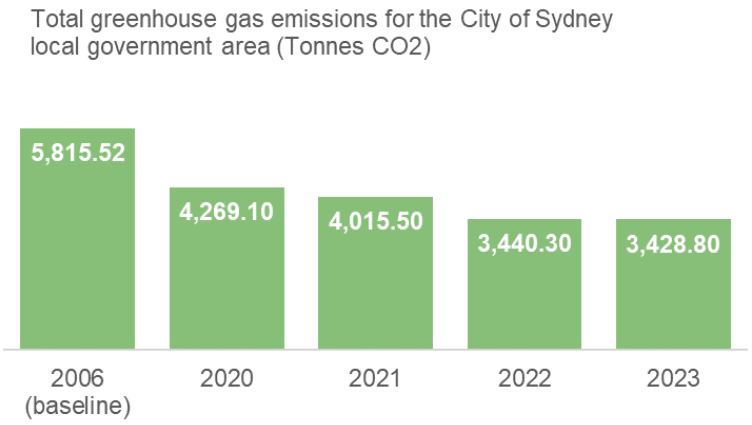
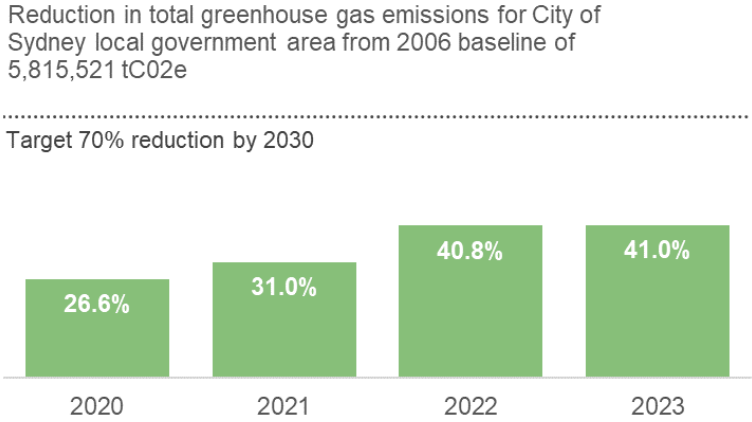
In 2023/24, our employees produced 483 activities for 4,830 residents and visitors across the local area to help people embrace circularity, avoid waste and make things last.

Image 4. Scene from Hyde Park in the city centre. Photo by Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney

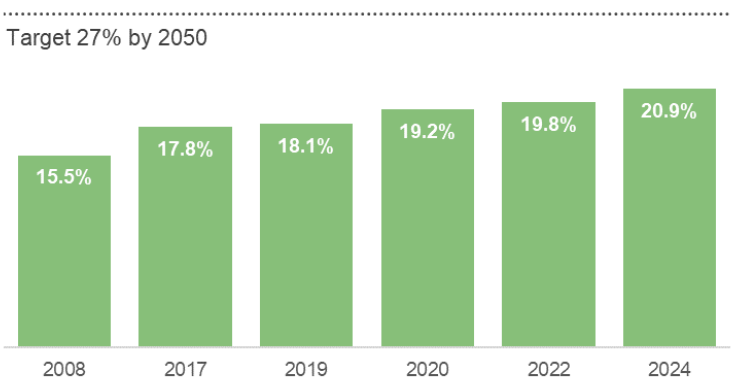
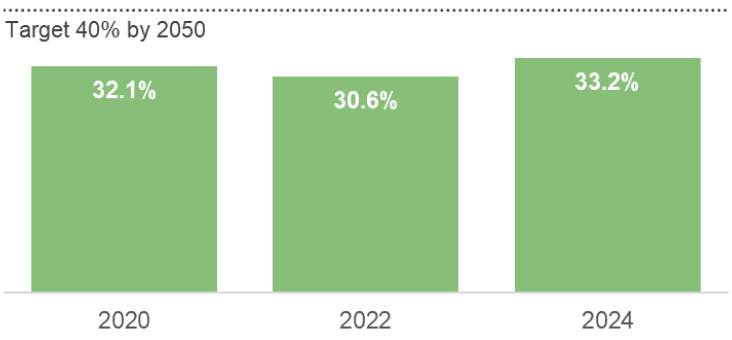
Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

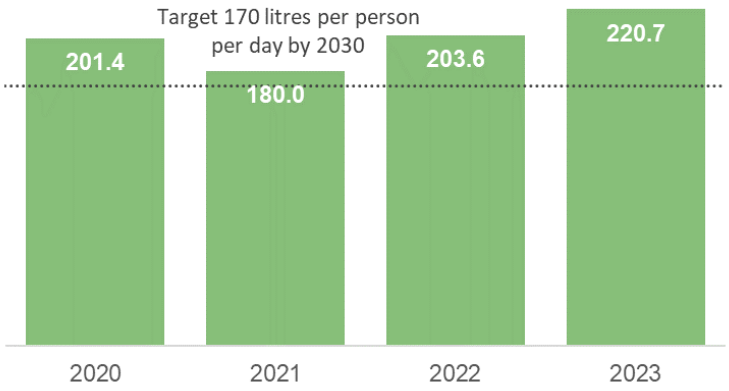
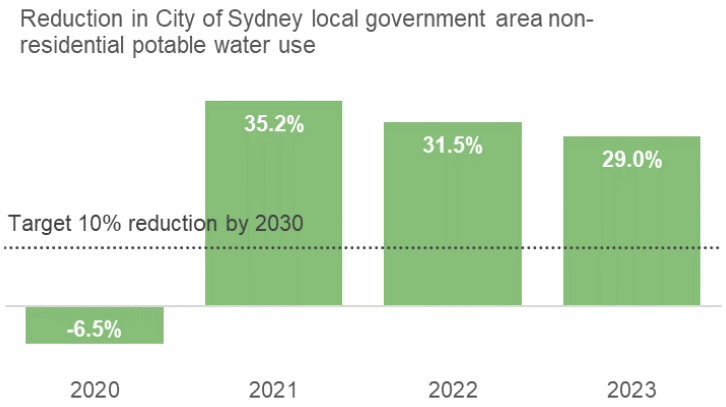
Objective 2.1 The City of Sydney local area reaches net zero emissions by 2035 with embodied carbon significantly reduced

Indicator	Comment / Performance
By 2035 we will achieve net zero emissions in the City of Sydney local area We report emissions based on the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC) 4 – an international benchmark	  Emissions have reduced due to the greening of the electricity grid.

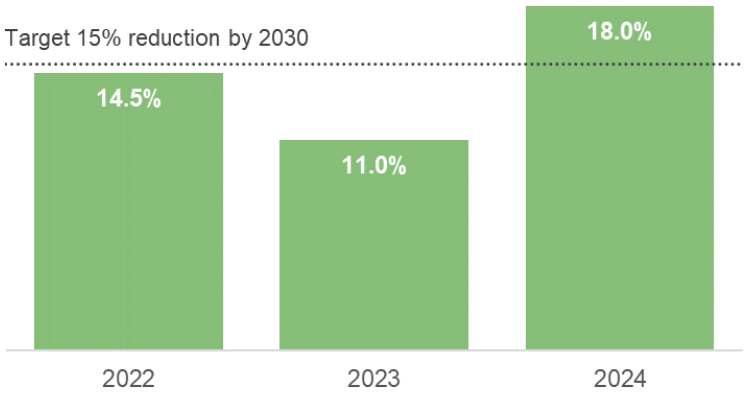
Objective 2.2 Greening has increased to create a cool, calm and resilient city

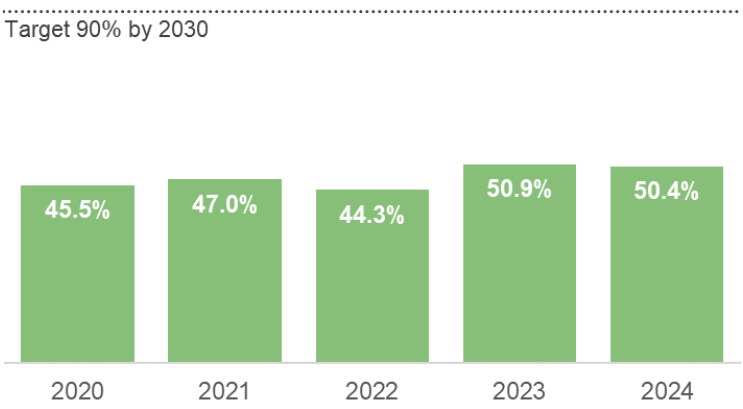
Indicator	Comment / Performance
Canopy cover across the local government area* Target is to increase canopy cover to 27% by 2050 (2008 baseline is 15.5%) *The 2020 data (19.1%) reported in the community strategic plan has been revised to 19.2% in the chart as updated data has become available	We have increased canopy cover; with 20.9% canopy cover across the local area by 2023/24. Our journey towards a greener city is on course, with the latest data affirming that we are steadily advancing towards our canopy cover targets of 23% by 2030 and 27% by 2050. 
Green cover across the local government area* Our target is 40% by 2050 *The 2022 data (33%) in the community strategic plan has been revised to 30.6% in the chart as updated data has become available	We have increased the extent of greening across our local area, which is now 33.2%. We are on track to achieve our target. Green cover can be variable because it encompasses a wide range of elements including gardens, lawns, and other vegetated areas. The 2022 greening measurement reflects a decrease in turf and vegetation less than 1.5m in height from a variety of smaller sites across streets, parks, and private properties, consistent with the data indicating losses across these land-use types This loss of green cover can be temporary, resulting from landscape improvement works, evidenced by the increase in green cover in 2024. For example, this can occur when turf is undergoing renovation and is temporarily stripped down to bare earth instead of being covered with grass, affecting the percentage of green cover measured at that time. 

Objective 2.3 Water is managed to support a resilient, sustainable and liveable city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Potable water consumption per resident (litres per capita, per day)* Our target is 170 litres per person per day by 2030 *The June 2020 data (190.9 litres per person per day) in the community strategic plan has been revised to 201.4 in the chart as updated data has become available	
Potable water consumption for commercial use (litres per m² per day) Our target is a 10% reduction by 2030 compared to the 2019 baseline of 2.32 litres per square metre per day* *The June 2020 data (2.34 litres per square metre per day or a 9% increase) in the community strategic plan has been revised to a 6.5% decrease in the chart as updated data has become available	

Objective 2.4 A circular economy approach is embedded in products, services and systems

Indicator	Comment / Performance
By 2030 there will be a 15% reduction in waste generated by each person based on 2015 baseline of 336.74 kg per capita	The 2030 target was reached in 2023/24 with an 18% reduction in the total amount of residential waste collected per capita compared with the 2015 baseline. 

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Residential waste diverted from landfill and recycled Our target is 90% by 2030 June 2021 data was incorrectly labelled as June 2020 data (47% of residential waste diverted from landfill and recycles) in the community strategic plan	To help reduce waste to landfill, bulky household waste that can't be recycled is turned into refuse derived fuel which is used to power cement kilns instead of going to landfill. The City of Sydney's growing food scraps recycling service is also helping to reduce waste to landfill. 

Objective 2.5 All city residents and businesses have the capacity to reduce emissions, adapt to a changing climate and share sustainable solutions

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Air quality across the area consistently meets national guidelines for particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and sulphur dioxide	The NSW Government operates 2 high quality air quality monitoring stations in our area, one in Alexandria and another at Cook + Phillip Park. In 2023/24 local air quality was consistently reported as 'good' (the best rating). Data is available at https://www.airquality.nsw.gov.au/air-quality-in-my-area/concentration-data.

Future challenges

Although we have made strong progress in the last 4 years, change needs to happen more rapidly in order to meet all of our targets and to do our part to meet the global goals of avoiding greater than 1.5' of warming. We also need to take more action to help our community to adapt the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing. In particular, we need to find ways to support the members of our community who are already disadvantaged and may be disproportionally impacted by climate change.

Sydney will run out of landfill space in the coming years, and finding a new solution is a challenge no council can solve alone. We will need to work with the NSW Government on this issue.

The electricity grid is rapidly greening, and new buildings will rarely install gas. The means new buildings will be far more environmentally sustainable in operation. However, the cost and effort required to transition existing buildings off gas is a major challenge.

Strategic Direction 3 – Public places for all

2050 Outcome:

The city has more places for people who live, work, invest and visit here. The history of the city and connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is evident in our public places. The city centre is an inviting and lively place, clean and safe, day and night, and with creativity and public art at its heart. Our local main streets are thriving hubs with their own distinctive characters.

We are continuing our ongoing renewal of existing public spaces as well as delivering new additional public spaces for a growing population.

Most City of Sydney residents live in apartments so providing high-quality, inclusive and accessible public places for people is essential. Demand for access to open green space increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly when public health orders required people to stay at home for much of the time.

As our population grows, we have been increasing the diversity of public spaces through land dedications and converting road space to provide more public space for walking, cycling, respite and contact with nature, to gather and socialise as well as for sport and recreation or to attend large events.

Highlights

George Street south pedestrianisation is now complete. Construction has commenced for the George Street north pedestrianisation between Essex and Hunter Streets that will include new public spaces at the intersections of Margaret, Bond, Jamison and Dalley Streets. In 2024 the City of Sydney won the Built Projects – City and Regional Scale Award for our transformation of George Street. The Australian Urban Design Awards honour the highest quality and most innovative urban designs.

Six new parks were delivered – Gunyama Park, The Drying Green, Butterscotch Park, North Rosebery Park, Honeykiss Park and Wimbo Park. New sport and recreation facilities were opened at Perry Park, Alexandria Park Community School, The Crescent and Gunyama Park Aquatic Centre.

Over 16 neighbourhood park renewals were completed. At the 2023 NSW Landscape Architecture Awards, our street tree master plan won the Award of Excellence in the landscape planning category and the Drying Green won the Award of Excellence in the parks and open space category.

Our Street Tree Master Plan and Urban Forest Strategy were both adopted in 2023. The plans are part of the City of Sydney's suite of tree management policies and allow us to better manage our urban forest and street trees. Our major tree management documents include:

- Greening Sydney Strategy 2021
- Tree Management and Donation Policy (2023)
- Urban Forest Strategy (2023)
- Street Tree Master Plan (2023)

As part of the Eora Journey, we are working with Place Management NSW, private land owners and various cultural institutions along the Harbour Foreshore to deliver Yananurala, curated by Emily McDaniel.

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

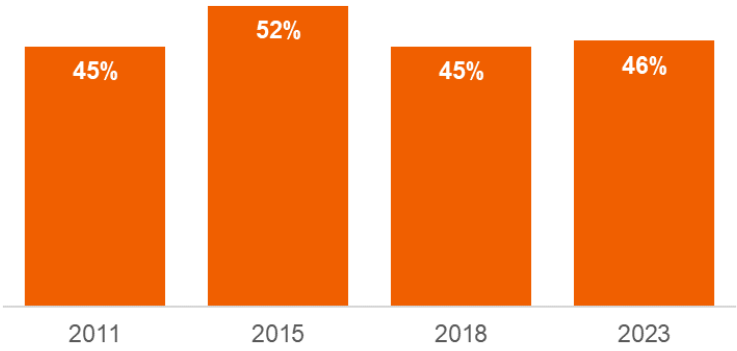
Objective 3.1 Aboriginal people, their history and cultures of this place are evident in the public realm

Indicator	Comment / Performance
A summary of outcomes will be reported at the end of each four-year period	Recognition in the Public Domain is one of 4 key components of the Eora Journey to acknowledge and celebrate the living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reactivate the knowledge of specific places and events in Aboriginal history at key sites within the city through public art projects. Completed in 2022, bara, by Waanyi artist Judy Watson, is a major permanent artwork that celebrates and acknowledges the First Peoples of Sydney, the traditional custodians of Gadigal Country. Yananurala / Walking on Country is the new name for the Harbour Walk which has been endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City of Sydney Council. Yananurala interpretive markers, including the bara icon, have been installed at 10 locations along the walk to reinstate the Aboriginal names and stories. A concept, Sitelines and Conversations, from the team Gaawaa Miyay led by Aboriginal designer Lucy Simpson, has been selected to create a storytelling thread connecting different places and Aboriginal stories and histories along the harbour foreshore through audio and text based installations. Also in development is Patyegarang (Tara/Dawes Point) a major Yananurala public art project which will tell the story of Patyegarang, the young Aboriginal woman who gifted the language of her people to Lieutenant William Dawes, astronomer on the First Fleet.

Objective 3.2 Welcoming, inclusive and connected streets and public spaces are created and maintained

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Increase in new public domain space calculated per m² on an annual basis, from acquisition, dedications, and road space conversions	George Street south, pedestrianised from Bathurst Street to Rawson Place, has provided 9,000 m² of additional car-free public domain space in the city centre. New parks include Gunyama Park, Drying Green Park, Butterscotch Park, North Rosebery Park, Honeykiss Park and Wimbo Park creating over 3.0 ha of additional open space. Over 14,898 m² of road and footway space has been converted to space for greening and tree planting in the period from July 2021 to June 2024.

Objective 3.3 Creativity and culture is embedded in the fabric of the city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community Wellbeing Indicator (Culturally rich and vibrant communities) Satisfaction with the range and quality of creative expression in the public domain such as art installations, murals, busking and street art in your local area Baseline (2011) 45% 'satisfied'	As of 2023, resident satisfaction has stabilised but is lower than satisfaction levels seen in 2015. 

Objective 3.4 Physical and visual connections to the harbour are strengthened

Indicator	Comment / Performance
A summary of outcomes will be reported at the end of each four-year period	We have been working with NSW state agencies to ensure strengthened physical and visual connections to the Harbour for development projects at Blackwattle Bay, Barangaroo and Circular Quay to ensure continuous public foreshore access from Woolloomooloo to Glebe.

Objective 3.5 Equitable access to open green spaces, playgrounds, pools, recreational and sporting facilities supports social connection and wellbeing

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Increase in green open space calculated per m² on an annual basis	Over 215 ha of parks and green streetscapes is managed by the City of Sydney. There was a 1 ha increase in 2023/24 due to new streetscapes and traffic treatments. This does not include civic spaces.

Future challenges

As population increases there is an ongoing challenge to ensure the city's open space network can accommodate diverse recreation demands and use. We are now working on a revision of the 2016 City of Sydney's open space, sport and recreation needs study to align with trends and research and demographic and social changes.

Image 5. George Street Rainbow Mural. Photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney

Strategic Direction 4 – Design excellence and sustainable development

2050 Outcome:

The city will continue to grow sustainably and with good design. Communities are inclusive, socially connected, healthy, and live in walkable well-serviced neighbourhoods, supported by public transport. We take the impact of our changing climate into account in the policies that influence development in the city.

We plan for a growing community by updating our planning framework to ensure there are opportunities for the city to grow through development that improves the liveability, productivity and sustainability of the city supported by infrastructure. Our planning is guided by the Local Strategic Planning Statement which sets a 20-year land use vision, balancing the need for housing and economic activities while protecting and enhancing local character, heritage, public places and spaces. It links state and local strategic plans with our planning controls to guide development.

The Central Sydney planning strategy provides a clear path for investment to help rebuild business confidence and support jobs in small and large businesses. It considers commercial development, hotel and visitor accommodation, cultural uses and retail alongside residential living. It ensures that Central Sydney is well positioned to contribute to metropolitan Sydney being a globally competitive and innovative city that is recognised internationally for its social and cultural life, liveability and natural environment. The strategy presents key moves and planning controls amendments with the aim of providing certainty, consistency and continuity for planning.

The City of Sydney supports development proponents in the convening of competitions to uphold the achievement of design excellence. Completed competitive design processes have included residential, affordable housing, student co-living and residential college, boarding house, serviced apartments, hotel, commercial office and retail development; located within the city centre and throughout the local area including Ultimo, Pyrmont, Erskineville, Zetland, Waterloo, Woolloomooloo, Alexandria, Glebe, Rosebery and Sydney.

Highlights

- Implementation of the Central Sydney Planning Strategy with 7 planning proposals for more commercial office space progressed under the strategy
- Finalisation of planning controls for the Oxford Street Cultural and Creative Precinct introducing incentives for more cultural and creative space while retaining the heritage character of Oxford Street
- Introduction of new planning controls for Net Zero Energy buildings which set standards for high energy performance and use of renewable energy in office, hotel and retail buildings
- Rezoning of the Botany Road corridor to create additional employment space and affordable housing close to the new Waterloo Metro Station and Tech Central
- New planning controls for North Alexandria to support renewal of the area for more intensive business uses and affordable housing while retaining the valuable industrial and urban services functions of the Southern Enterprise Area
- Draft planning controls for Pyrmont-Ultimo to increase housing and business activities in response to the future Pyrmont Metro Station and the NSW Government’s Place Strategy alongside a new contributions plan to fund infrastructure for the growing community

- Preparation of an update to the local environmental plan and development control plan to encourage build to rent and co-living housing in Central Sydney, increase greening, deliver more accessible and family friendly homes, support the provision of electric vehicles (EVs), provide streamlined design competition pathways for affordable housing and reintegrate areas under state control into the City of Sydney's plans
- Review of retail planning controls for the Green Square area to ensure opportunities to develop supermarkets that will serve the growing community while continuing to support the town centre as the primary retail destination in Green Square
- Since October 2021, we have finalised 24 planning proposals to change planning controls including 14 lodged by proponents. 12 more planning proposals are currently underway with 7 lodged by proponents.

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

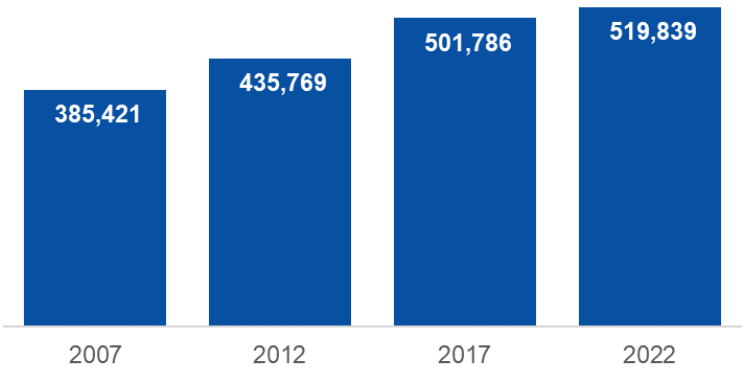
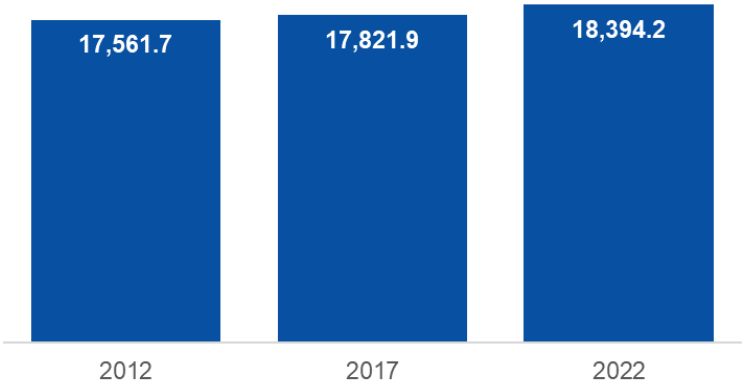
Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 4.1 The city's liveability will be enhanced through well planned and designed development

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Every resident is around a 10-minute walk to what they need for daily life Baseline (2017) – the following proportions of residents lived within a 10-minute walk (800m) of the following services: Fresh food – 99.96% Childcare – 99.39% Health – 100% Leisure – 99.99% Social – 94.98% Learning – 99.98% Cultural – 98.09%	

Service	Baseline % (2017)	Latest result % (2022)
Fresh food	99.96	99.95
Childcare	99.39	99.38
Health	100	100
Leisure	99.99	99.97
Social	94.98	99.94
Learning	99.98	99.3
Cultural	98.09	97.5
Open Space	–	100

Objective 4.2 Productivity will be supported by planning for jobs, innovation, and enterprise activities

Indicator	Comment / Performance
By 2036 there will be around 700,000 jobs in the local government area, including 200,000 new jobs These will be a combination of onsite jobs occurring at a fixed address and jobs that occur in the city but are transient, in construction or located in home-based businesses Source: City of Sydney Floorspace and Employment Survey	In 2022, the number of jobs in the local government area was 519,839. Despite the significant economic impact of the pandemic, the City of Sydney saw an increase of 18,000 jobs between 2017 and 2022. Growth was strongest in the finance and financial services sector, with this sector now accounting for 125,000 jobs in the City of Sydney. 
Commercial floor space in the local area, including occupied and vacant business floor space Baseline (2012) 17,561,703 m²* City of Sydney Floorspace and employment survey *The data provided in our community strategic plan for 2012 (18,096,215 m²) and 2017 (18,371,384 m²) have been revised in the chart due to a refinement in our calculation method for usable commercial floorspace	In 2022, the amount of commercial floor space in the local government area was 18,394.2 m². The net commercial floor space in the city increased by over 570,000m² (3.2%) between 2017 and 2022. 

Objective 4.3 Communities will be supported by the provision of infrastructure and assets that are aligned with growth

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Annual investment on acquiring, developing, and enhancing infrastructure and assets	We continue to lift our investment in new assets and infrastructure including parks, public domain, public art, stormwater assets and community facilities. Annual investment was $75.43m in 2022/23 and $96.38m in 2023/24.

Objective 4.4 Good design leads to buildings and public spaces that are high performing, well designed, inviting and inclusive

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Number of design excellence competitions completed	Since 2000, a total of 166 competitive design processes have been completed including 23 in the period from July 2021 to June 2024.

Objective 4.5 Well planned and designed development reduces environmental impacts and improves resilience, health and sustainability

The results for this objective are reported in Strategic Direction 2 covering emissions, water, waste and energy consumption and increased greening measures.

Future challenges

The national housing accord sets ambitious housing targets for each state to deliver between 2024 and 2029. It is accompanied by a National Planning Reform Blueprint with measures to improve planning systems. In response the NSW Government has issued councils housing targets, with 18,900 dwellings expected to be completed in the City of Sydney by 2029. It has also proposed planning changes to increase housing supply which override local planning controls, such as the low and mid housing reforms.

The development sector continues to face feasibility challenges from a 35 to 40 per cent increase in materials and labour costs, shortages of skilled labour, tougher financing hurdles after the Banking Royal Commission, steep interest rate rises, and a record number of insolvencies in the building industry.

The NSW Government has established Ministerial Expectations for planning and development functions, which require significant annual decreases in development application determination times and has also published council league tables of development application performance.

We will continue to support Sydney and Australia’s economic competitiveness by providing opportunities for business and employment growth, facilitated by the expanding metro rail network, and for the technology, health, education and media businesses in the innovation sector amongst the demand for more housing.

Strategic Direction 5 – A city for walking, cycling and public transport

2050 Outcome:

The city is greener and calmer, with more space for people on the streets – including footpaths and cycleways. More people choose to walk, ride and use public transport. All vehicles in the city are zero emissions.

The City of Sydney local government area is expected to grow in terms of residents and the number of people that visit the city to work, study and play. Transport currently accounts for around 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the local area and is projected to increase as a proportion of overall emissions. Without intervention, we are not going to be able to sufficiently reduce our transport-related emissions.

Our communities have told us they want a more walkable city, with fewer or no cars in the city centre: a city where there is “space to walk, bike, stroll, jog, chat, rest, relax and enjoy life.” They want streets with more trees, gardens and plants; more space for walking; and more space for children to play and for socialising. They want a city that is easy for all ages, all people and all mobility levels.

The City of Sydney’s overall built footprint is essentially fixed. Planned growth will result in more density, but we cannot create more surface space to support that. We are focused on the best use of our limited public space. To achieve this, we apply a transport framework that supports the growth of the city by prioritising the most efficient modes for different transport functions in different streets. The framework acknowledges the importance of access for construction, and for goods and services for business.

This means a shift away from prioritising space for private vehicles, which take up a large proportion of our public street space as they use space very inefficiently, and cause major impacts in terms of emissions, noise and injuries. It also means that we can create more space for people and places by using our street space more efficiently and more equitably.

No city has been able to build their way out of traffic congestion, and the City of Sydney’s approach reflects that of other successful global cities by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, while maintaining access for business.

Highlights

- Pedestrianisation works on George Street south and Devonshire Street were completed in August 2023. Construction has commenced for the George Street north pedestrianisation between Essex and Hunter Streets that will include new public spaces at the intersections of Margaret, Bond, Jamison and Dalley Streets.
- We are now pedestrianising George Street north from Hunter Street to Essex Street, which will be extended to Alfred Street later when the NSW Government’s Circular Quay Redevelopment project is completed.
- Council adopted the Electrification of Transport in the City – Strategy and Action Plan, the City Access Strategy and Action Plan and A City for Walking Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision.
- The following sections of the strategic bike network were completed this term;
    - in Sydney: King Street between Pitt Street and Phillip Street, Pitt Street between Reiby Place and King Street and College Street between Oxford Street and Prince Albert Road

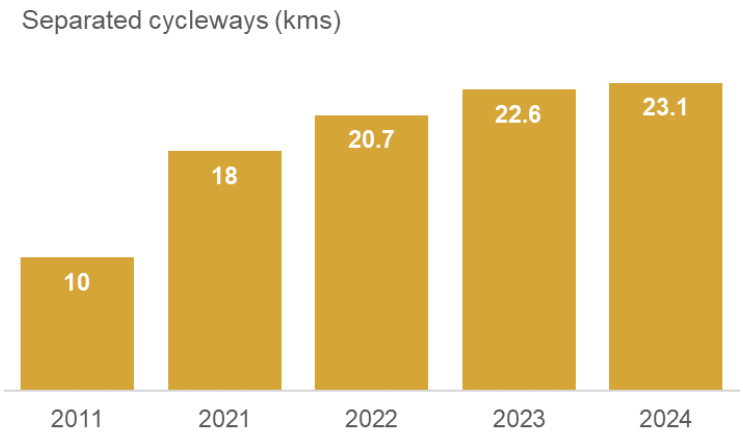
- in Annandale: Booth Street between Wigram Road and Alexandra Drive
- in Erskineville: MacDonald Street between Bridge Street and Hadfields Street and Henderson Road, Railway Parade and Bridge Street between Mitchell Road and Ashmore Street
- in Alexandria: Harley Street and Ashmore Street between McEvoy Street and Fox Avenue, Huntley Street between Mitchell Road and Belmont Street and Mitchell Road south of Huntley Street; and in Waterloo: Gadigal Avenue, Potter Street and Crystal Street between Lachlan Street and Danks Street
- in Zetland: Zetland Avenue and Portman Street.

– Speed limits have been reduced so that over 75% of streets are 40 kilometres per hour or under.
– Sydney Metro opened new stations at Barangaroo, Martin Place, Gadigal, Central and Waterloo.
– Sydney Metro West is being constructed, with new stations at Pyrmont and Hunter Street set to open in 2032.

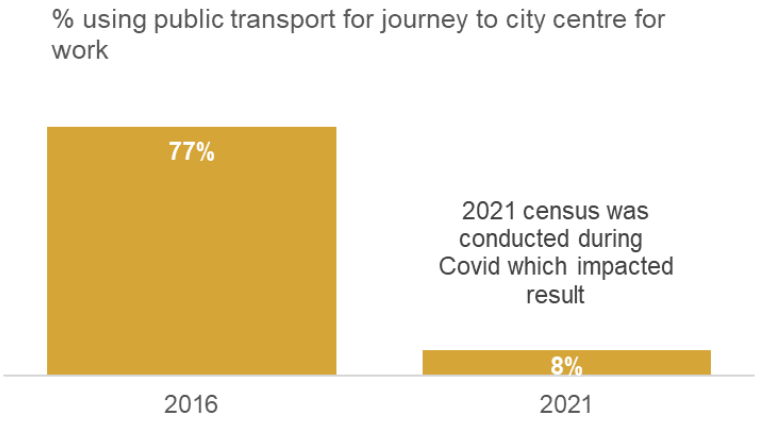
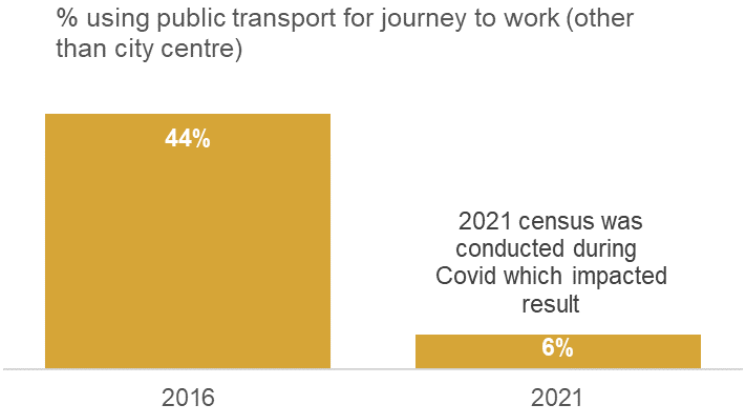
Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

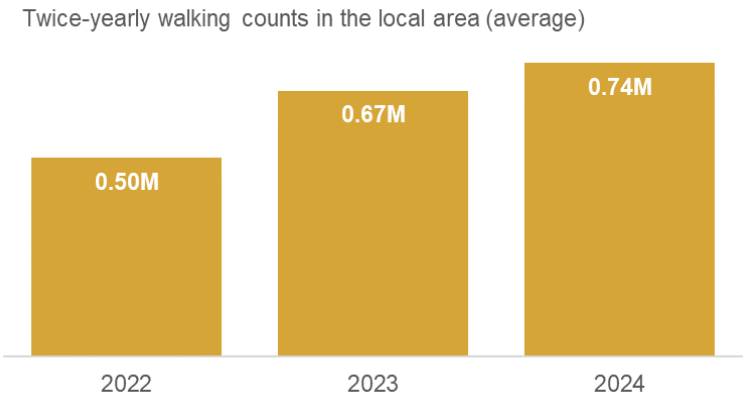
Objective 5.1 Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Increase in length of separated cycleways throughout the Local Government Area calculated per metre on an annual basis Baseline (December 2021) 20,340.96 m (20.3 km)	As at June 2024 there were 23.1km of separated cycleways in the City of Sydney Local Government Area. Since December 2021 there has been a net increase of 2.8 kms. 

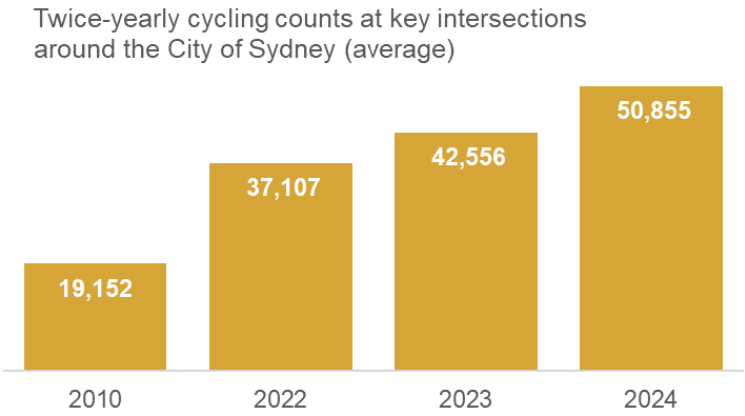
Objective 5.2 Most people use the high-capacity, rapid and frequent public transport network that connects the city and the metropolitan area

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Journey to work using public transport to the city centre and other locations in the local government area Baseline (2016), 77% city centre, 44% other locations in the local government area Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census	The 2021 result is very low because the 2021 Census was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. NSW residents spent a significant amount of time under stay-at-home orders and their work and travel behaviour were impacted with a significant number of people responding to the census as "working from home". The Census is undertaken every 5 years, with the next census taking place in 2026.   However, NSW government data shows trips on public transport in the Sydney CBD increased from an average of 12 million in June 2021 to 22 million in June 2024.

Objective 5.3 More people walk more, because walking is the most attractive and convenient choice for short trips in the local area

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Increase in walking in local government area Twice yearly walking counts in the local area measuring average growth across a sample of locations Baseline November 2021 503,442	The aim of this measure is to track the increase in pedestrian activity across the local government area. The measure includes both weekend and weekday counts, and the sites have been selected so that there is one on each village high street and 4 in the city centre. For 2023/24 the twice-yearly pedestrian count average across the sample locations was 739,720 which is a 47% increase from the November 2021 baseline of 503,442. This indicates a very strong post-covid recovery. 

Objective 5.4 More people ride more, because it is an attractive, convenient and safe option for everyday transport

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Increase in cycling in Local Government Area Measure is total trip count at 68 intersections across the local area twice a year, in March and October Baseline (March 2010), 19,152	The March 2024 count of 51,271 is an increase of 168% since the count in March 2010. 

Objective 5.5 Freight, servicing and parking will be managed to support the efficient functioning of the city while improving the amenity of city spaces

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Kerb space in city centre allocated to deliveries, servicing, and mobility parking	The City of Sydney manages a range of kerbside restrictions to balance need for services and amenity. We undertook an audit of kerbside restrictions in 2023 to establish a baseline for future reporting. Kerbside restrictions include work zones, taxi zones bus zones, no parking zones, no stopping zones, loading zones and time limited parking. The restrictions vary by time of day with loading zones prioritised between 6am-5pm, peaking at almost 1,000 spaces at 10am. The number of mobility parking spaces varies between 30-40 spaces depending on time of day. Our intent is to increase off-street loading capacity to enable a progressive reduction of on-street loading in nearby streets, using the kerb space for other purposes while ensuring businesses retain access for their freight and servicing needs. We will continue to monitor kerbside restrictions data every 5 years.

Future challenges

Bike share systems can succeed in increasing bicycle use if the NSW Government sets up the appropriate regulatory framework. This will reduce footpath clutter and increase community support for the schemes.

As activity on foot continues to grow in the city centre, we will need to reallocate space away from private vehicles, to support more efficient transport modes, or place improvements including outdoor dining and more planting. Reducing the speed limit to 30km/h would support increased foot activity.

Green Square needs better connections. The City of Sydney continues to support a Metro west extension to Zetland as an immediate priority. A light rail connection for Green Square will complement this. Light rail can also connect Tech Central along Broadway and Parramatta Road.

Strategic Direction 6 – An equitable and inclusive city

2050 Outcome:

Everyone feels welcome and can afford to live here if they choose. Everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential in a city that is fair and just.

Our vision is for a just and inclusive city, and a socially sustainable Sydney. Social sustainability is about strengthening our society to improve our individual and collective wellbeing and resilience. Cities that make equality and social justice central to their growth are stronger and more resilient, creating opportunities for everyone to thrive. Building a strong, inclusive society is a shared responsibility for governments, business and the wider community. Our social sustainability policy and action plan – A City for All 2018-2028 outlines the City of Sydney's aspirations for a socially, just and equitable city.

We have an ongoing commitment to making Sydney truly inclusive and welcoming. This commitment is embodied in our inclusion (disability) action plan. The plan aligns with our long-term vision of an inclusive city and includes actions designed to actively address barriers faced by people with disability. The plan was developed through extensive consultation with people with disability and/or caring responsibilities, local disability service providers, peak disability representatives, advocacy organisations and members of our Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

Highlights

In 2022 we introduced fee waivers for eligible community groups using our community venues for hire, which has been extended to 30 June 2029. Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024, 244 requests for fee waivers have been granted for nearly 14,000 hours of use, valued at almost $420,000.

In June 2023 we launched the Oxford Street Pride Business Charter. The Charter supports businesses to adopt practices that are inclusive of diverse LGBTIQA+ communities and to work together to celebrate the LGBTIQA+ history and character of the precinct. As of July this year, 66 businesses had signed up.

In 2024 we created a new $4.5 million food relief grant program over three years to help organisations distribute food to struggling households as the cost-of-living soars. The first round of grants funded 21 community organisations who in turn support over 200 agencies providing the equivalent of 350,000 meals for food insecure people in our city.

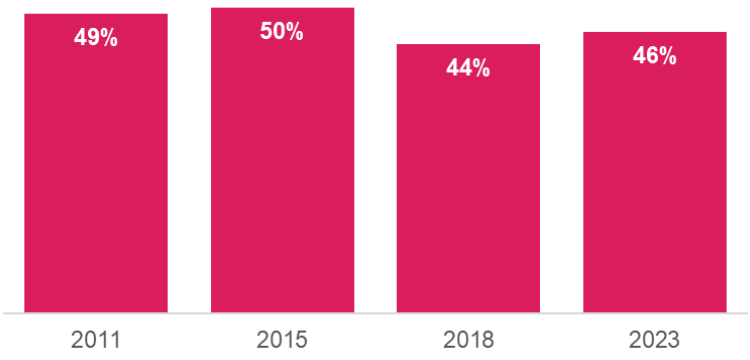
Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

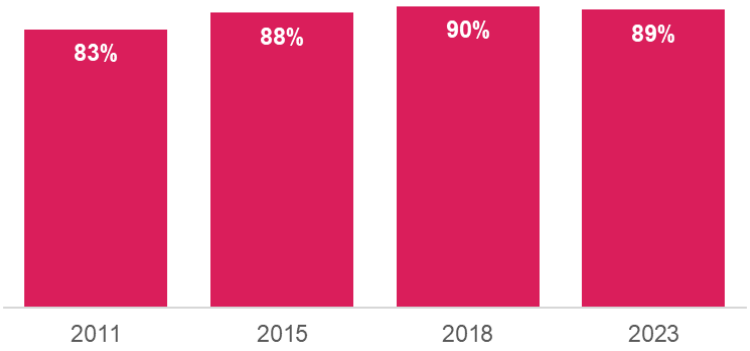
Objective 6.1 We will respectfully strengthen partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and prioritise their cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic aspirations

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that the City has formed or maintained a formal partnership Source: Stretch RAP Annual Report *Closing the Gap priority reform one	We are continuing to explore opportunities to develop new partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. We have maintained one formal partnership, the principles of cooperation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. This action is relevant to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, specifically priority reform number one: 'Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making'. The City of Sydney continues to hold meetings with the local NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and affiliates on Closing the Gap initiatives including promoting opportunities such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund. This funding program supports a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector to deliver projects that meet the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the local area. The City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel is an important formal relationship made up of 16 community members who continue to provide advice and guidance on our activities.

Objective 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city

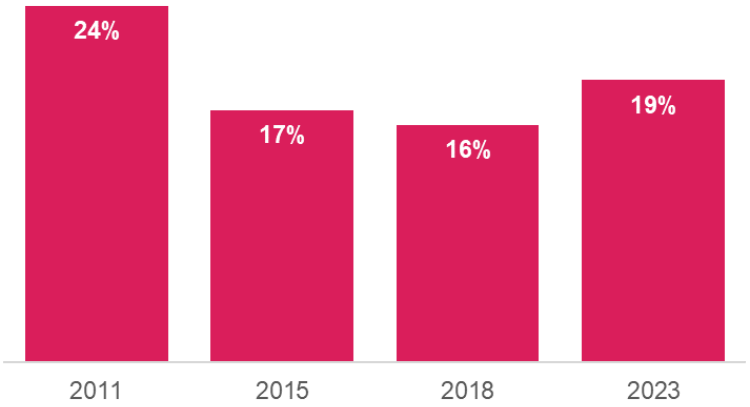
Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Number satisfied with feeling a part of the community Baseline (2011) 49%	The latest update shows that the proportion of people who answered the survey indicate they are less satisfied than the 2011 baseline. 

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Is it a good thing for a society to be made up of people of different cultures and communities? Baseline (2011) 83% 'agree'	The latest update shows a 1% decrease in the proportion of people surveyed who agree to this, compared to the 2018/19 results. Nonetheless, the proportion of residents who appreciate diversity remains high and above the 2011 baseline.

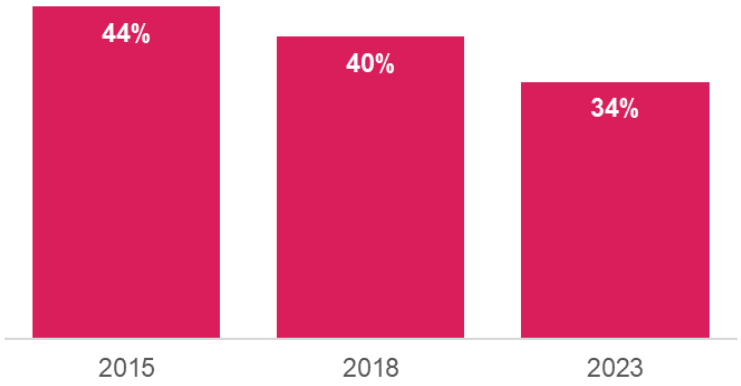
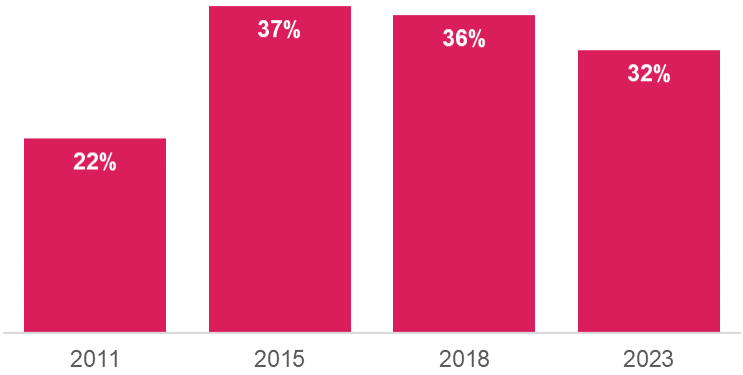


Objective 6.3 Everyone benefits from equitable economic growth and has financial security

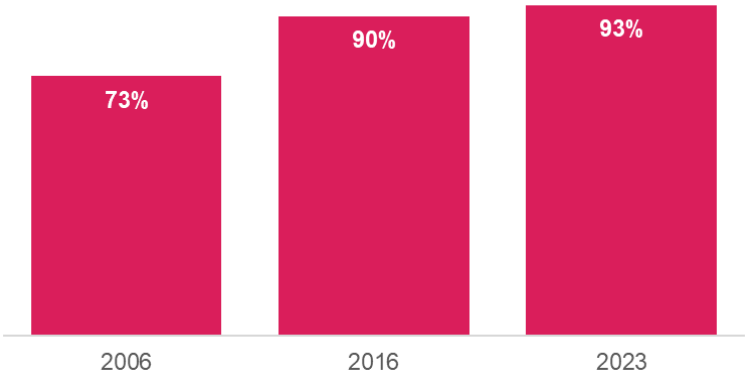
Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Financially insecure Baseline (2011) 24%	The latest result shows that almost one-in-five (19%) residents cannot raise $2,000 in two days, an increase from the 2018 results but lower than the 2011 baseline figure of 24%.



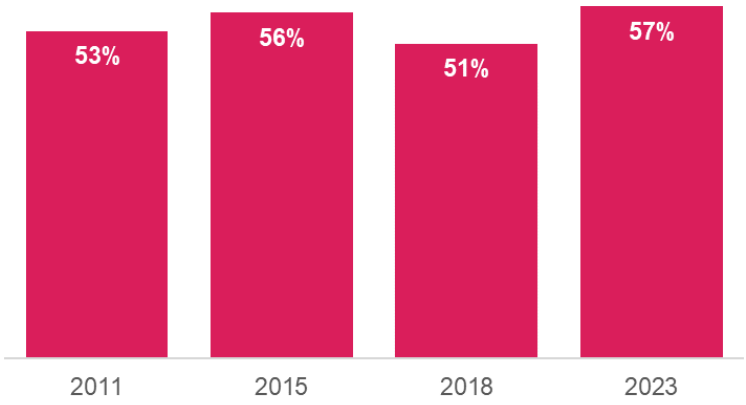
Objective 6.4 Communities are engaged and actively participate in the governance of their city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Opportunity to have a say Baseline (2015) 44% 'agree'	The latest update shows that the proportion of residents who agree they have opportunity to have their say has decreased over time. 
Community wellbeing indicator: Participation in decision making activity Baseline (2011) 22%	The proportion of residents participating in decision-making has decreased since the 2015 results. 

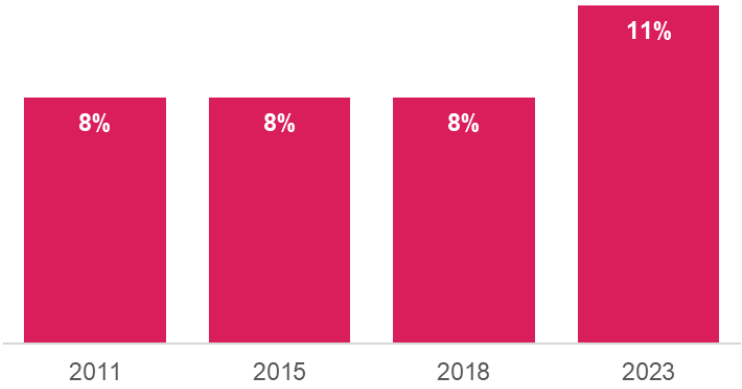
Objective 6.5 Communities have the skills, tools and access to technology to engage and participate in a digital life

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Internet access at home Baseline (2006) 73%	Internet access increased to 93% in 2023. 

Objective 6.6 There is equitable access to education and learning opportunities

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Satisfaction with access to learning and education opportunities Baseline (2011) 53% 'satisfied'	The latest update shows that satisfaction has increased since the 2018 update. 

Objective 6.7 A sustainable and equitable food system that increases access to nutritious and affordable food

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Percentage of people who ran out of food and could not afford to buy anymore in the past year Baseline (2011) 8%	The latest update shows that the proportion of residents who are food insecure is now 11%, higher than any level recorded in previous surveys reflecting the cost of living pressures across the city. 

Future challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our communities and exposed existing inequities and amplified chronic stresses affecting our communities such as housing affordability, social cohesion and food insecurity. There have been measurable decreases in social cohesion, increases in the rates of food insecure households and decreases in health and wellbeing, including mental health.

Key challenges to social sustainability across our community include support for self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increased social connection to address growing loneliness and social isolation, increased housing stress, income and food insecurity, reducing the digital divide, and increasing perceptions of safety and quality of life.

These are disproportionately impacting traditionally marginalised people in our community including people with disabilities, people on low incomes, people renting including social housing residents, those experiencing homelessness, with English as a second language, and of diverse sexualities and genders.

The current increased cost of living and inequality of wealth in our community will continue to put pressure on social sustainability. Continued and whole of government action and investment is needed in social and affordable housing, community and social infrastructure, wellbeing and programs that address social isolation.

The pandemic also identified a need for improved disaster planning and response, particularly food supply during emergencies. In addition, a need for locations for safe, sustainable food production, including First Nations food production, for the Sydney basin to reduce reliance on imported food and reduce the potential impacts of extreme weather on food supply and availability in the city.

Strategic Direction 7 – Resilient and diverse communities

2050 Outcome:

The city and its public places and infrastructure can withstand impacts from a changing climate and emergency situations. We work with communities, businesses, and other organisations to strengthen connections and networks, to prepare the city and be able to recover from most situations.

The City of Sydney local area is facing more challenges from the impacts of climate change and social and economic disruptions, which threaten the city's stability and prosperity.

Resilience involves the social, economic and environmental systems that support urban areas, including physical infrastructure. The goal of urban resilience is to create adaptive, robust and secure cities that effectively respond to and recover from challenges.

The City of Sydney plays a major role in strengthening community resilience by providing projects, programs and services to support local communities. Other people and organisations have responsibilities for parts of the complex network of systems that keep our local area running. They are responsible for working together and individually to ensure the safety of our community and the functioning of our city in good times and bad.

The scale of disasters and disruptions affecting cities often overwhelms their ability to respond locally. Extreme weather events, bushfires and the Covid-19 pandemic reminded us that we are a global, hyperconnected city. As a well-resourced council, leader and vocal advocate we made a clear decision to work with communities and organisations beyond our local area boundaries.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused significant health, economic and social impacts. This amplified existing chronic stresses, impacting people already facing barriers and creating a new group of communities in need. Responding to compounding and cascading impacts of the pandemic required coordinated support from the City of Sydney. This included emergency food distribution, dedicated community hotlines, targeted communications, personal protective equipment and community quick response grants.

Highlights

The City of Sydney's Resilience Strategy 2023-2028 was adopted in December 2023. Our resilience strategy requires partnerships and collaboration between the City of Sydney and other levels of government, business and community organisations. We're prioritising action and investment in physical infrastructure, social systems, economic sustainability, and programs, people and existing initiatives

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

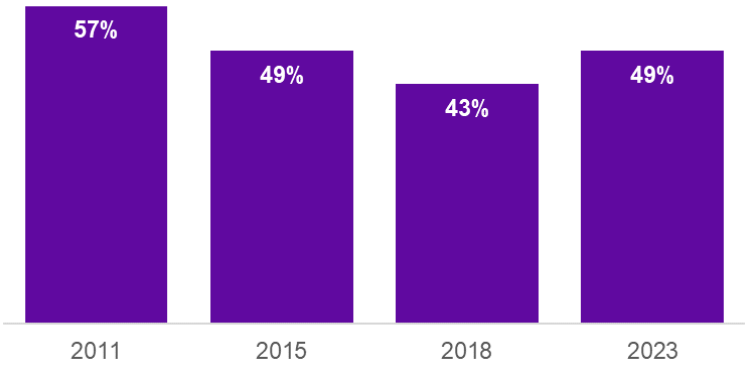
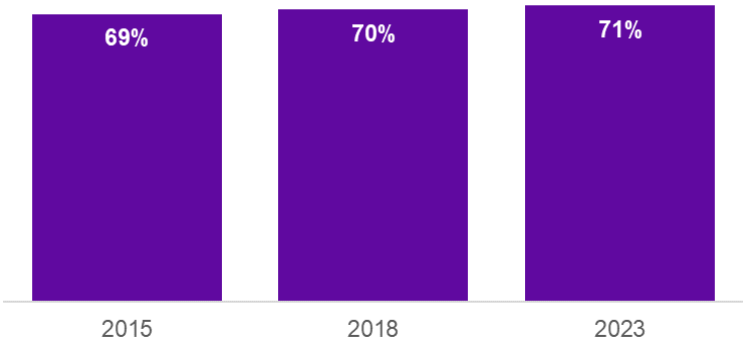
Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 7.1 Communities are connected and socially cohesive

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Number satisfied with feeling a part of the community Baseline (2011) 49%	This measure is reported in Objective 6.2.

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Survey question: is it a good thing for a society to be made up of people or different cultures and communities? Baseline (2011) 83% 'yes'	This measure is reported in Objective 6.2.

Objective 7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Number satisfied with opportunities for sporting or recreational activities Baseline (2011) 57% 'satisfied'	The latest update shows that satisfaction has increased since the 2018 results but remains lower than the 2011 baseline. 
Community wellbeing indicator: Number satisfied with library access Baseline (2015) 69% 'satisfied'	The latest update shows that satisfaction has increased over the survey years. 

Objective 7.3 Infrastructure, services and communities are prepared for and can withstand the impacts of acute shocks and chronic stresses and emergency situations

No measure is currently available for this objective, however we have:

- commenced work on our contribution to the State Disaster Mitigation Plan released in March 2024.
- included resilience considerations in the City of Sydney's asset management plan template.
- published a local Resilience Strategy 2023-2028.
- adopted an interim floodplain management policy which is being implemented through the development approval process
- held community events including those in social housing to promote readiness with other first responder organisations with 81% of attendees reporting they knew where to get help if they needed it.
- coordinated a multiagency emergency management discussion exercise and field exercise to test capacity and capability to respond to a transport infrastructure emergency.
- coordinated the activities of the Local Emergency Management Committee including emergency planning, response and recovery, regular meetings, project work, and reporting on emerging issues.

Objective 7.4 The city economy is diversified to strengthen its resilience

Indicator	Comment / Performance		
Relative size of industry sectors (top 6) measured by the number of jobs in each. The aim is for no one sector to dominate Baseline (2017): Finance and financial services 23.1%; Professional and business services 19.8%; ICT 6.8%; Government 6.8%; Creative industries 6.6%; Higher education and research 5.7%	**Industry sector**	**Baseline (2017)**	**2022**
	Finance and financial services	23.1%	24.0%
	Professional and business services	19.8%	18.1%
	ICT	6.8%	7.5%
	Government	6.8%	-
	Tourist, cultural and leisure	-	6.4%
	Creative industries	6.6%	6.2%
	Food and drink	-	6.2%
	Higher education and research	5.7%	

Objective 7.5 People feel safe in the city

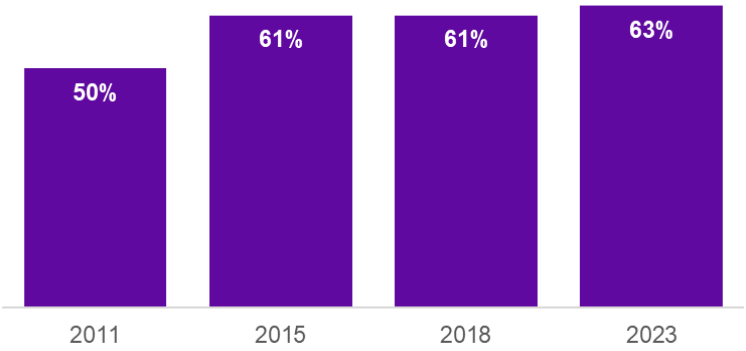
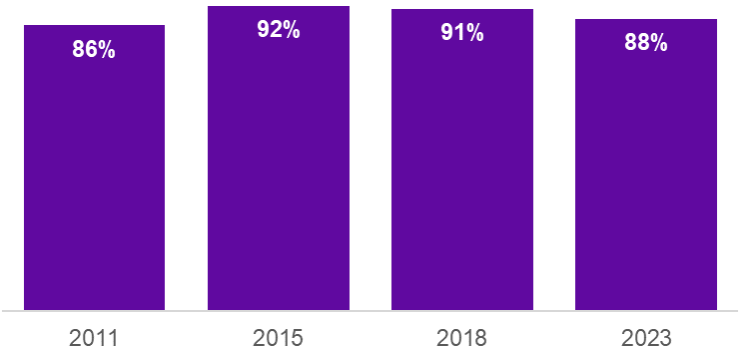
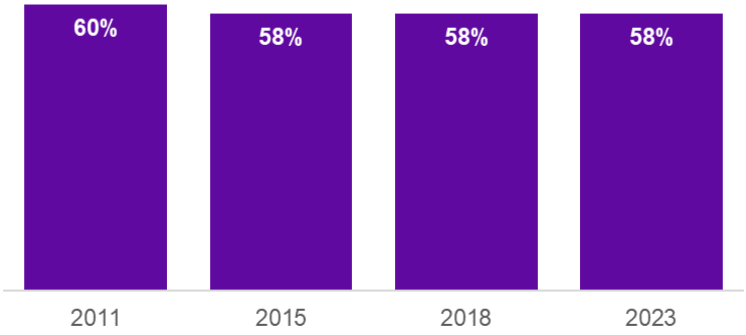
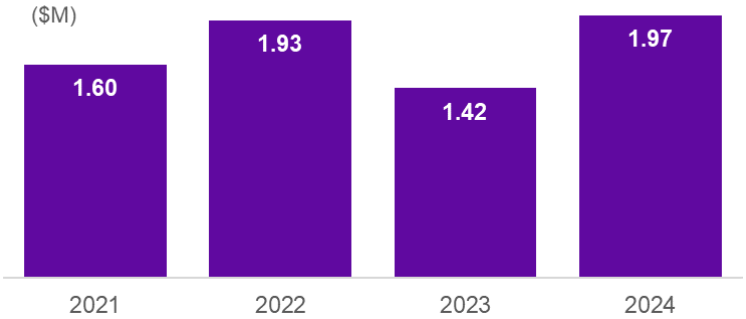
Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicators: Perceptions of safety: Walking alone near home after dark Baseline (2011) 50% feel 'safe'	The latest update shows that the proportion of residents who feel safe walking alone near home after dark has trended upwards over time. 
Perceptions of safety: Walking alone near home in daylight Baseline (2011) 86% feel 'safe'	The latest update shows that feelings of resident safe walking alone near home in daylight has decreased since the 2018 results but remains higher than the baseline. 

Image 6. Sydney skyline from Blackwattle Bay. Photo by Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Objective 7.6 Communities are empowered to lead the change they want to see in the city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community Wellbeing Indicator: Residents have participated in at least one community engagement activity in the preceding 12 months Baseline (2011) 60%	The latest update shows that resident participation in community engagement has remained stable over the last decade. 
Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses contracted to the City of Sydney and value of spend measured on an annual basis	In 2024 we engaged 76 suppliers who identified themselves as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The value of spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business increased to $1.97 million in 2024. 
Value of grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations * Closing the Gap priority reform two	In 2023/24 we approved grants to the value of $1.94 million to 49 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, groups and organisations. In 2022/23 we awarded $1.63 million through 49 applications, and in 2021/22 we awarded $588,898 through 29 applications.

Future challenges

In Sydney we're 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 and housing insecurity.

By 2060 the annual economic cost of natural disasters in Australia is expected to increase from an average $38 billion per year to at least $73 billion and as much as $94 billion per year. In NSW the total economic costs of natural disasters over the next 40 years will be at least $360 billion. More frequent and severe shocks and stresses – in part, due to climate change – will test our capacity to cope as increasing impacts become more likely to exceed our limits.

Strategic Direction 8 – A thriving cultural and creative life

2050 Outcome:

We are proud of the city. We are all able to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the city's cultural life.

The City of Sydney has long supported the artists, musicians, writers, performers and institutions under the Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014–2024 and we've achieved a lot for our communities in the 10 years since. Each year we've made an average investment of $34 million in culture. This includes our events, cultural programs, art projects and commissions, and the grant funding we provide to fuel local creativity.

Highlights

We allocated $7 million towards the groundbreaking Eora Journey program, meaning 'people's journey' in the Sydney Aboriginal language. The program celebrates the living culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As part of the Eora Journey, we commissioned 4 First Nations artists to create major public artworks. In 2022 bara, our Monument to the Eora, the first peoples of Sydney, was installed. Created by artist Judy Watson, bara represents the fish hooks crafted and used by Gadigal women for thousands of generations. We also began installing signage for Yananurala, a nine-kilometre walk that will highlight Aboriginal history and culture at places along the Harbour foreshore.

Also under our Eora Journey plan we bought the historic post office building at 119 Redfern Street, in the heart of Redfern. We renovated it to house an accessible Aboriginal knowledge and culture centre. The new centre was developed in close consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and opened in May 2024.

City Art, our public art program, commissions new permanent and temporary public artworks. The program also cares for and manages more than 260 permanent public artworks including fountains, memorials and items of cultural heritage. During the last council term the commissioned works include In Through the Out Door by Callum Morton, Stream by Kerrie Poliness in The Drying Green, and bangala by Aunty Julie Freeman and Jonathan Jones in Gunyama Park.

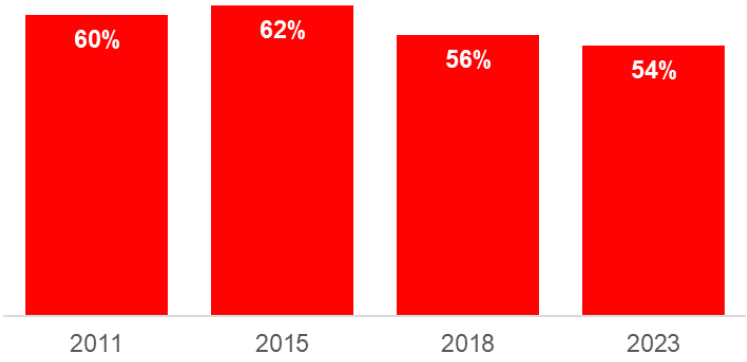
In June 2022, we increased our stock of affordable creative space with the opening of our five-storey City of Sydney creative studios in Bathurst Street, leased from the developer Greenland for a peppercorn rent for 99 years. This state-of-the-art facility provides affordable spaces to suit all kinds of artists, musicians, podcasters, performers and other creatives.

Our draft cultural strategy 2025–2035 was exhibited in 2024. It addresses the evolving needs of Sydney's creative sector and builds on our Creative City cultural policy and action plan 2014–2024. The strategy is informed by new research and targeted consultation. It tackles challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, economic pressures and the housing crisis. The strategy supports our long-term Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, and aims to protect cultural spaces, support creative workers and foster a vibrant cultural life.

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 8.1 We value our cultural life and champion our creative industries

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Number satisfied with feeling a part of the community Baseline (2011) 49%	This measure is reported in Objective 6.2.
Community wellbeing indicator: Satisfaction with the number and quality of arts and cultural events such as festivals, performances and exhibitions in your local area Baseline (2011) 60%	The latest update shows that since 2015, resident satisfaction has declined. 

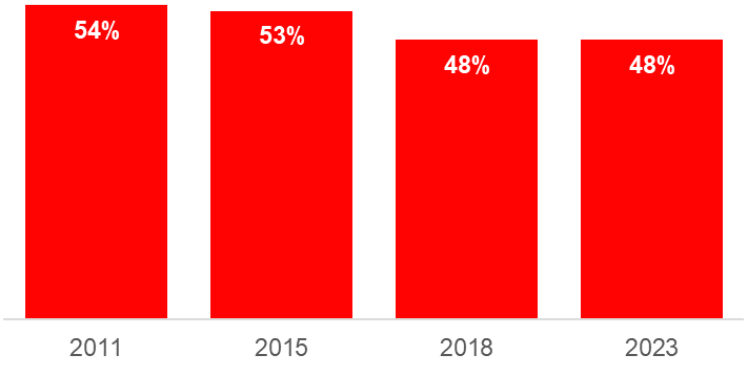
Objective 8.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultural practice are visible and respected

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Satisfaction with the range and quality of creative expression in the public domain. (response from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only) Baseline (2018) 33%	This measure looks at the proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are satisfied with the range and quality of creative expression in the public domain. The 2023 update shows that fewer than one-in-five (17%) are satisfied, a drop from the 2018 results (33%). It should be noted that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents for the 2018 Wellbeing Survey was very low.

Objective 8.3 An increasing number of creative workers live or work in the city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
City of Sydney floor space and employment survey: creative industries workforce Baseline (2017) 33,027	Between 2017 and 2022 the creative industries workforce reduced slightly from the baseline to 32,380.

Objective 8.4 Sydney's cultural life reflects the diversity of our communities

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Community wellbeing indicator: Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities Baseline (2011) is 54% 'agree'.	The latest update shows that agreement remains lower than the 2011 baseline. 

Objective 8.5 There is an increased supply of accessible creative space

Indicator	Comment / Performance
City of Sydney floor space and employment survey: total m² for creative industries enterprise Baseline (2017*) 1,212,900 m² *Note that the 2017 baseline as reported in the community strategic plan has been adjusted from 1,502,759 m² to align with the current coding framework	Between 2017 and 2022 the total area for creative industries enterprises reduced from 1,212,900m² to 1,148,908m² a loss of 5%.

Future challenges

Costs of compliance continue to be a barrier to operating creative spaces and producing events. Across all levels of government, a culture of 'risk elimination' is not being matched with resources for risk management, and operators whose business models can't absorb these costs are simply 'out of the game'.

Unaffordable housing supply is displacing creative workers, and unaffordable housing costs are the main reason artists are leaving Sydney.

Investment is mostly focused on presentation, not production. There have been some exceptional updates and additions made to Sydney's cultural infrastructure. While feedback suggests these are well received, we're also hearing that the bulk of the investment is in major institutions and it has almost exclusively focused on places to present and consume culture, not the kinds of creative spaces where culture is made.

Diversity and inclusion is improving but it is slow progress. Efforts to increase the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability in our cultural life are slowly achieving results. The sector reports a maturing and authenticity in the engagement and representation of First Nations people, and that resources to support artists with disability to make and participate in culture have improved. There continues to be logistical barriers to more deeply involving linguistic diversity in our cultural offerings and a financial imperative that favours broadest possible audience appeal.

Image 7. *bara* sculpture in the Royal Botanic Gardens by artist Judy Watson. Photo by Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Strategic Direction 9 – A transformed and innovative economy

2050 Outcome:

The city maintains its position locally, nationally, and internationally as a destination for business, investment, and talent. Innovation is central to the economy and transformation has occurred across all industries. Wealth and benefits are shared equitably.

Sydney is home to Australia's largest local economy. The economy within the City of Sydney generated more than $142 billion per annum in 2024, accounting for around 6% of Australia's GDP[1].

The city's economic performance directly affects the 229,000 residents and 520,000 workers in our local government area. As Australia's global gateway and as a regional centre, the city's economy plays a significant role in supporting and influencing economies far beyond our geographic boundary. It is extremely important that the city's economy is thriving and ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The previous Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 guided the City of Sydney's approach to economic development over the last 10 years. The strategy contained strategic priorities to – strengthen Sydney's competitiveness, improve productivity and capacity, and promote opportunity. It also set employment and growth targets for 2030 and provided the rationale for the development of related action plans to support priority sectors of the economy.

The city's economy achieved strong growth over the past decade, but it has been disrupted by Covid-19 pandemic. Our economy has started to recover, but many key sectors across the visitor economy are still struggling. Many economic problems were exposed and amplified during the pandemic, including barriers to participation and inequality, unaffordable space, lack of economic diversity, environmental damages, insecure jobs, skill and labour shortage and more.

There have also been many structural changes to the economy triggered or accelerated by the pandemic including: online shopping and delivery services being in high demand; the growth of the gig and sometimes insecure economy; and working from home is likely to stay. The city centre needs must offer new purposes and unique experiences to attract visitors back and the need for economic resilience is imperative.

Highlights

In August 2024, the City of Sydney released its new draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 for public engagement. The new strategy aims to reinforce Sydney's historic economic strengths while focusing on four key underlying vulnerabilities that pose a challenge to the economies ongoing sustainability - climate change, rising inequality, slowing productivity and ongoing uncertainty about how our city is used post-pandemic, as well as cost of living and economic headwinds, presenting challenges in the transition.

The new strategy was developed in close collaboration with the City of Sydney's Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel which has CEO-level representation from a variety of businesses and organisations. It also incorporates extensive community engagement undertaken on the draft Economic Development Strategy Discussion Paper (2022-2023).

[1] National Institute of Economic and Industry Research & Economy.id, 'City of Sydney economic profile', 2023. Available: https:// economy.id.com.au/sydney

In delivering the previous Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023, the City has enabled several major new projects to support economic development, from the light rail along the length of George Street that has transformed the city's central spine, to the Green Square urban renewal project which enabled $22 billion in private development and 33,000 homes, through to the Central Sydney Planning review that has unlocked 2.9 million sqm of employment floor space in our central CBD.

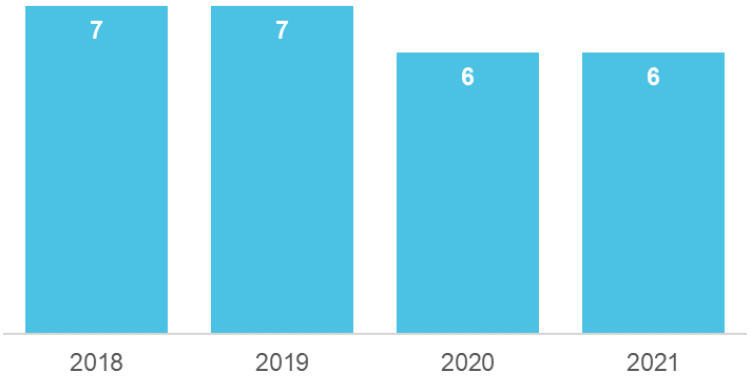
These investments have helped to contribute to the city's strong economic performance over the past 10 years, with the total jobs in the city growing from 436,000 jobs to 520,000 jobs. There has also been a continual shift towards a more advanced, knowledge-led economy with the proportion of knowledge jobs growing from 64% to 68%. The City of Sydney local government area economy has also experienced stronger than forecast long-term economic growth, with the economic output growing by more than 40%, from $101 billion to $142 billion.

Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 9.1 An expanding innovation economy will support Sydney's future prosperity

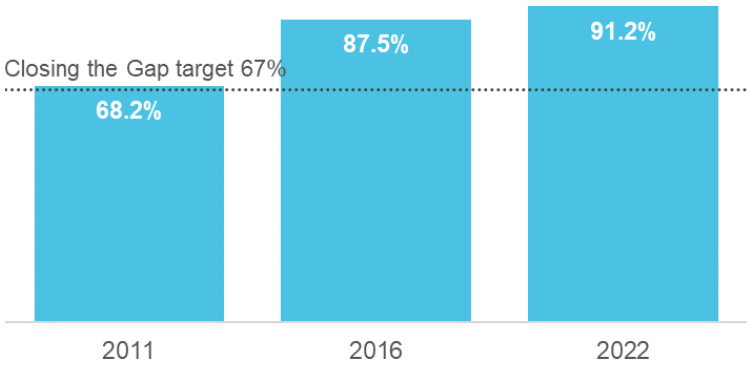
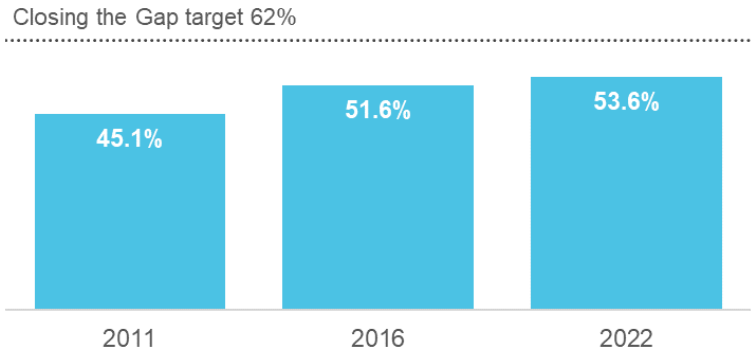
Indicator	Comment / Performance
Benchmarking Sydney's Performance, Committee for Sydney: Innovation & Research & Development Sydney's performance score (knowledge economy)	This data is now no longer available from the Committee for Sydney. A new KPI to measure Sydney's performance in technology and innovation will be adopted in the upcoming Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035, anticipated for adoption in late 2024.



Objective 9.2. The transition to a zero-carbon economy offers new economic opportunities

No measure is currently available for this objective and will be assessed in the next review of the community strategic plan. Through the new Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 and partnerships with key actors in the sector, such as the Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub, measures that capture the economic opportunity of the green economy transformation will be further explored.

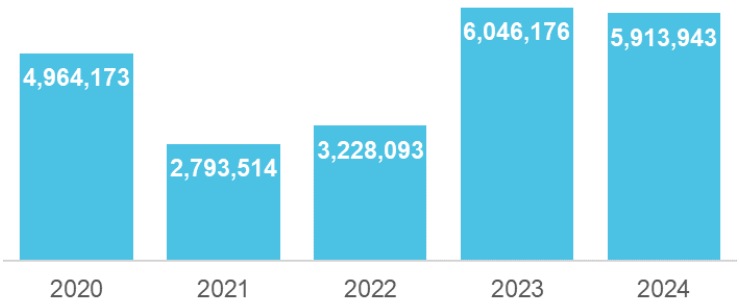
Objective 9.3 An inclusive city economy provides opportunities for everyone to participate and share in its prosperity

Indicator	Comment / Performance
By 2036, an increased proportion of all jobs to be secure jobs Baseline (2017) 27,015 insecure jobs	The number of secure jobs increased between 2017 and 2022 from 474,690 to 486,049, however the proportion as a total of all jobs decreased over that period from 94.6% to 93.5%. The number and proportion of insecure jobs increased between 2017 and 2022 from 27,015 or 5.4% to 33,790 or 6.5%, largely due to the impacts of Covid-19 on smaller businesses in our area.
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15 to 24 years) from the Local Government Area who are in employment, education or training Baseline (2011) 68.2% The National Closing the Gap target is 67% Closing the Gap target 7	The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in employment, education and training has consistently grown since 2011, and now sits at 91.2%. 
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 from the Local Government Area who are employed Baseline (2011) 45.1% The National Closing the Gap target is 62% Closing the Gap target 8	The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed has grown consistently grown since 2011, and now sits at 53.6%. 

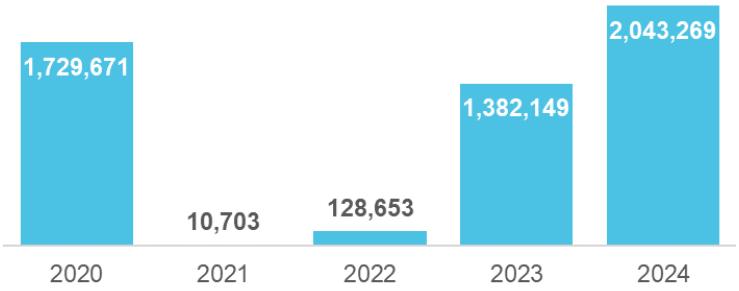
Objective 9.4 Creativity and great experiences fuel the vitality of the city

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Visitors to the city: Domestic overnight trips (quarterly total) June 2021: 1,189,000 International overnight visitors (quarterly total) June 2021: 7,993* International average no. of nights (quarterly average) June 2021: 7.1 *The June quarter 2021 data (7,993) reported in the community strategic plan has been revised to 10,703 in the chart as updated data has become available	The number of visitors to our city was impacted by Covid-19 and restrictions on travel. The number of visitors to our city has since recovered. In 2023/24, 2 million international visitors stayed an average of 14 nights in the city.

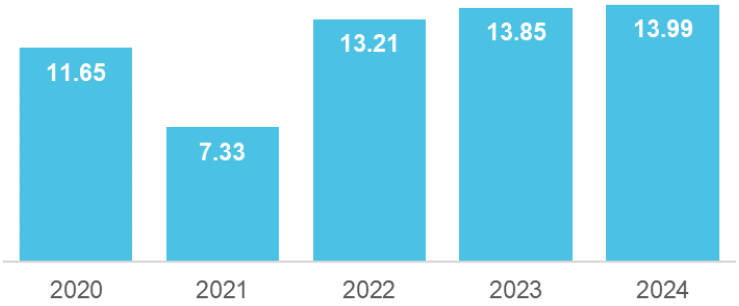
Domestic visitor overnight trips



International overnight visitors



International visitor average number of nights



Objective 9.5 Unique local neighbourhoods and the global city centre support thriving economic activity

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Number of business establishments employing workers in the city economy Baseline (2017) 23,511 business establishments	Covid-19 had a significant impact on small businesses in the city, with many unable to survive. The number of business establishments employing workers in the city economy decreased from 23,511 in 2017 to 21,618 in 2022. The 2022 data reflects the following changes since 2017: - 9,044 no longer operating - 7,151 new business - 14,467 ongoing businesses.

Future challenges

The new economic development strategy aims to reinforce Sydney's historic economic strengths while focusing on 4 key underlying vulnerabilities that pose a challenge to the economies ongoing sustainability.

The 4 underlying vulnerabilities the strategy seeks to address are as follows:

- Climate change threatens key sectors like tourism but also presents an economic opportunity if Sydney positions itself as a global hub for net zero innovation.
- Rising inequality, and particularly affordability issues, have the potential to stifle our economy and erode our society's sense of fairness and opportunity.
- Slowing productivity and an uncoordinated approach to innovation are leading to lower commercialisation and impacting Sydney's attractiveness to talent
- Economic headwinds, cost of living and broader uncertainty are changing how our city is used post-pandemic, presenting challenges in the transition.

Strategic Direction 10 – Housing for all

2050 Outcome:

This is a city where everyone has a home. Social, affordable, and supported housing is available for those who need it. High-quality housing is available for everyone.

Sydney remains Australia's least affordable city. The high cost of housing is an important economic and social risk, particularly within the City of Sydney local government area where housing prices are amongst the highest in Australia.

We continue to use every lever available to maximise the amount of affordable and diverse housing in our local area including through planning mechanisms such as developer contributions and planning agreements, selling discounted land to community housing providers, and through grants from our Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund.

Sydney's first dedicated affordable housing project for transgender women will be established in Darlinghurst following the sale of properties previously owned by the City of Sydney at a significant discount. Another site will provide much needed housing for women after the B Miles Women's Foundation purchased it from the City of Sydney at a discount.

The number of community housing providers who will receive developer contributions to build affordable housing in the city has increased this year. Now Bridge Housing and St George Community Housing will join City West Housing in becoming valuable delivery partners working with us to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Planning levers to retain low-cost housing options in the city have been designed to prevent the loss of boarding houses and older apartment buildings. If approved, they will complement our other efforts to ensure the supply of housing is inclusive.

Advocacy for the rights of renters, and the need for affordable and appropriate housing for lower income households has continued to be a focus of ours. This has included representations to the state and federal governments on issues of importance to the goal of ensuring everyone has access to safe, secure and affordable housing that meets their needs in the city.

We also continue to advocate with state and national government to increase investment towards housing models that best support those experiencing homelessness; including transitional, crisis and supported housing models such as Common Ground.

Highlights

- We developed changes to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 to support build-to-rent and co-living housing in Central Sydney and contribute to greater housing diversity and help address the current housing supply shortage. These changes were publicly exhibited in 2024.
- The City of Sydney's affordable housing levy came into effect across the local area in July 2021. The scheme is expected to create 1,950 more affordable dwellings. This will add to the 1,464 affordable rental housing units in the local area at July 2024. Planning proposals for NSW Land and Housing Corporation sites at Cowper Street in Glebe, Elizabeth Street in Redfern and Waterloo Estate (south) will increase social and affordable housing.
- The Affordable Housing Levy for Ultimo-Pyrmont was increased to match the same level as for the rest of the local area.
- Planning controls for the Botany Road corridor were changes to incentivise affordable housing with additional height and floor space.

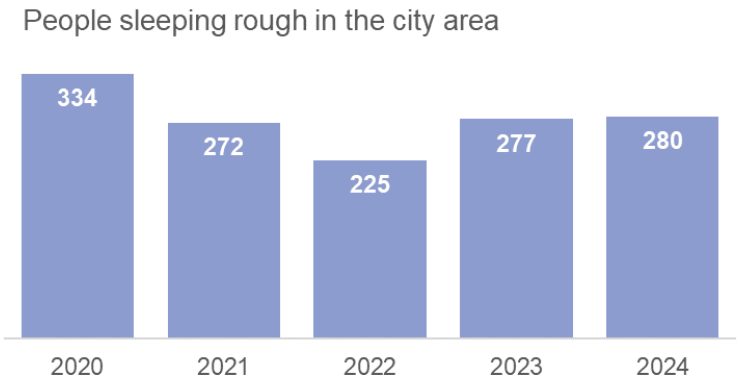
- On 1 July 2024 the City of Sydney's new Affordable Housing Contributions Distribution Plan came into effect and this will support delivery of the Affordable Housing Program by providing funding support to three community housing providers to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- The redevelopment of the Waterloo South public housing estate will include significant provisions for Aboriginal housing. The announcement by the NSW Government that it has selected Stockland, Link Wentworth Housing, City West Housing and Birribee Housing as the preferred partners to deliver the first stage of the Waterloo renewal project, will see an Aboriginal provider (Birribee Housing) significantly increase their footprint in the area.

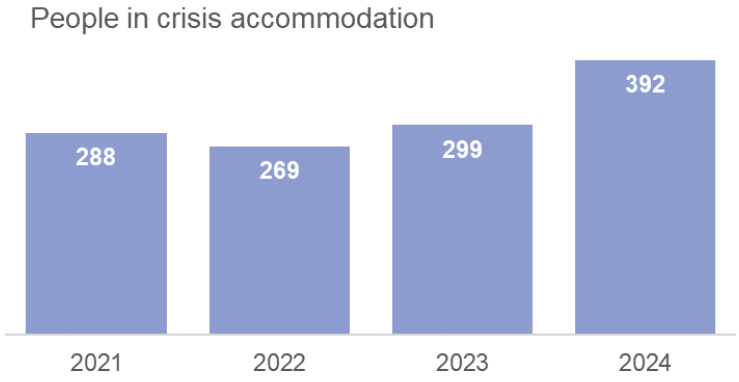
Community Strategic Plan objectives and indicators

Each community strategic plan objective contains indicators to track our progress towards our goals for 2050.

Objective 10.1 People sleeping rough or at risk of experiencing homelessness have access to adequate accommodation, services, and support to meet their needs

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Progress will be measured by street counts and the number of people in crisis accommodation on those nights	The street count is conducted annually. At the time of the 2024 street count, in addition to 280 people sleeping rough, 392 people were staying in crisis accommodation in the local government area.





Objective 10.2 The supply of well maintained, safe, secure and sustainable social housing is increased to support diverse communities

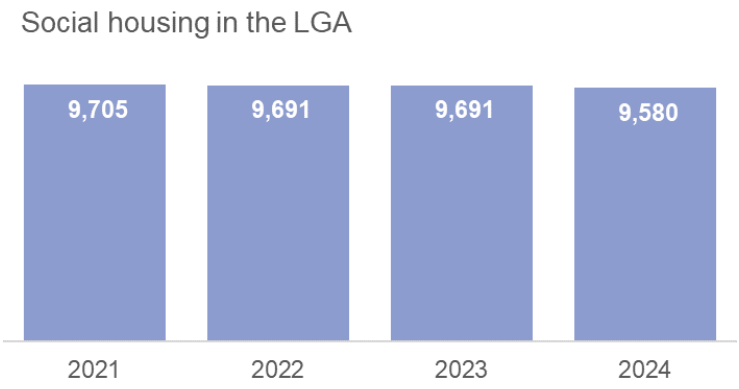
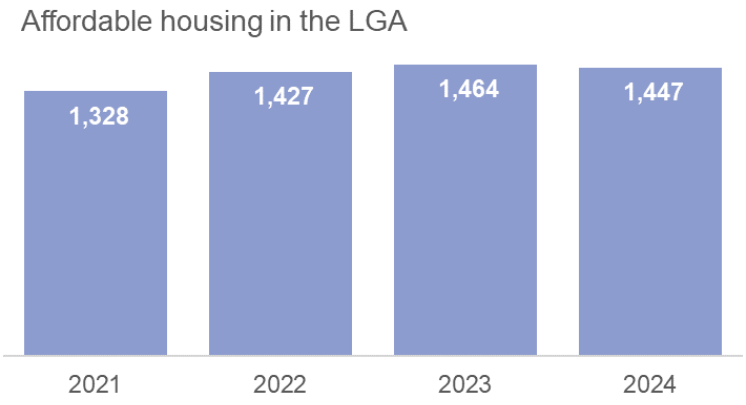
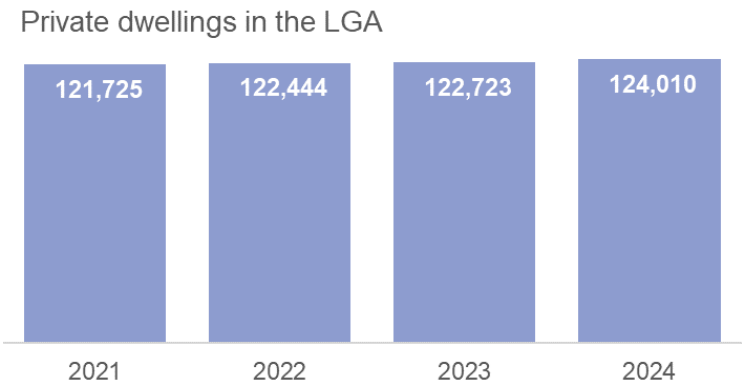
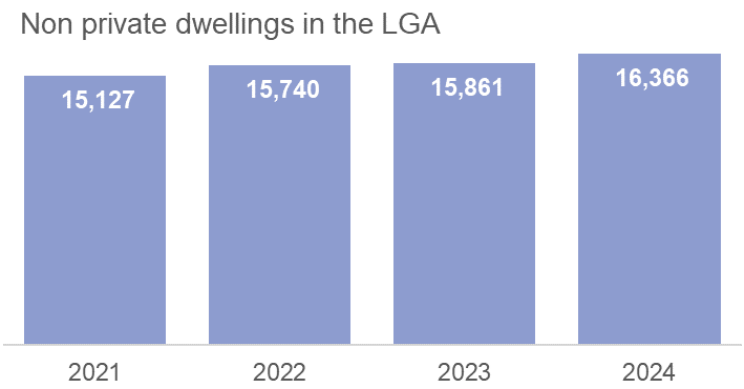
Indicator	Comment / Performance
7.5% of private dwellings are to be social housing As at June 30, 2021 there were 9,705 social housing dwellings, representing 8% of private dwellings City of Sydney housing audit	As at June 2024, in the local area there were an estimated 9,580 social housing dwellings, representing 7.7 per cent of private dwellings. It is noted that the redevelopment of several public housing estates in the area is expected to result in a short to medium term reduction in the number of available dwellings. Once completed there will be an increase in the number of social housing dwellings. The NSW government (Homes NSW) and community housing sector manage the social housing portfolio in the City of Sydney local area. 

Image 8. Skyline from Potts Point. Photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney

Objective 10.3 An increased supply of affordable housing supports diverse communities and the economy

Indicator	Comment / Performance
7.5% of private dwellings are to be affordable housing As at June 30, 2021 there were 1,328 affordable housing dwellings, representing 1.1% of private dwellings City of Sydney housing audit	As at June 2024, in the local area there were: – 1,447 built affordable and diverse housing dwellings, representing 1.2% of private dwellings – 556 affordable and diverse dwellings in the development pipeline; and – a further 1,385 affordable and diverse housing dwellings that are in the pre-application stage. The City's LGA wide affordable housing levy came into effect in July 2021. The City's levy scheme is projected to deliver an additional 1,950 affordable dwellings. If considered all together, the built, pipeline, expected and projected affordable housing dwellings will equal 5,273 affordable rental dwellings and affordable diverse dwellings to 2036. This equates to 44 percent of the 12,000 affordable dwellings target for 2036, or about 3.4 percent of the private dwellings target for 2036. 

Objective 10.4 Every neighbourhood has a mix of housing accommodating diverse and growing communities

Indicator	Comment / Performance
By 2036 there will be 156,000 private dwellings and 17,500 non-private dwellings As at June 30, 2021 there were 121,725 private dwellings and 15,127 non-private dwellings (boarding houses, student accommodation, residential aged care services) City of Sydney housing audit	As at June 2024, in the local area there were: – 124,010 private dwellings representing 79.5% of the private dwelling target for 2036. This is a net increase of 1,287 between June 2023 and June 2024; and – 16,366 non-private dwellings (boarding house rooms, student accommodation rooms, residential care services), or 93.5% of the non-private dwelling target for 2036.  

Objective 10.5 There is an increased supply of culturally appropriate social and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Data to measure progress will be sought annually from Community and Social Housing providers and documented in the City of Sydney housing audit. This will be corroborated with five-yearly data from the ABS Census	From July 2025, the 3 community housing providers (City West Housing, Bridge Housing and St George Community Housing) who receive developer contributions will be required to report on the number and proportion of Aboriginal households living in affordable housing annually. It is acknowledged that this will provide limited insight into the overall supply of social and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the majority live in housing provided by other organisations. At the time of the 2021 Census, there were 1,845 households with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander persons residing.

Future challenges

There continues to be an increase in the number of people sleeping rough in our city who are non-residents of Australia and, therefore ineligible for housing supports. There has also been a measurable increase over the past 3 years in the number of people sleeping rough with complex mental health presentations. This makes it challenging for them to secure and maintain tenancies or access appropriate health supports. There are currently insufficient resources available to support people in these circumstances to access housing pathways or maintain tenancies.

The increasing shocks and stresses arising from climate change, including an increase in the number of days where temperatures are a risk to human health, have a significant impact on people sleeping rough in our city, many of whom have complex underlying health conditions.

The national housing accord sets ambitious housing targets for each state to deliver between 2024 and 2029. The NSW Government set the City a housing target of 18,900 dwellings to be completed by 2029. However, the residential development sector continues to face challenges in deliver supply from a 35 to 40 per cent increase in materials and labour costs, shortages of skilled labour, tougher financing hurdles after the Banking Royal Commission, steep interest rate rises, and a record number of insolvencies in the building industry.

Many of the challenges faced by the residential development sector are also faced by community housing providers developing new affordable housing. Reduced residential activity also results in a reduction in housing levies which are an important funding stream for community housing providers engaged in development.

A lack of long term, secure and genuinely affordable housing options has social, cultural environmental and economic implications for the City. Coordination across 3 levels of government is required to achieve meaningful improvements in this area.

Financial performance

Since the amalgamation of the (former) South Sydney City Council, parts of Leichhardt City Council and the City of Sydney in 2004, we have delivered consistently strong operating performance results, which have enabled the City of Sydney to accumulate significant cash reserves, and to internally fund its capital works program. Our closing cash and equivalent investments balance at 2023/24 was $766.3 million.

The City of Sydney entered the 2024/25 financial year in a strong financial position due to more than a decade of stable progressive government, professional corporate administration, a policy commitment to prudent financial management, and strategically sound investments.

We have long sustained a strong liquidity position, along with diversity in significant alternative income streams to supplement a substantial rating base.

We plan to maintain our financial position and performance, to ensure resilience and maintain capacity to adapt and respond to emerging community needs in a measured and equitable manner.

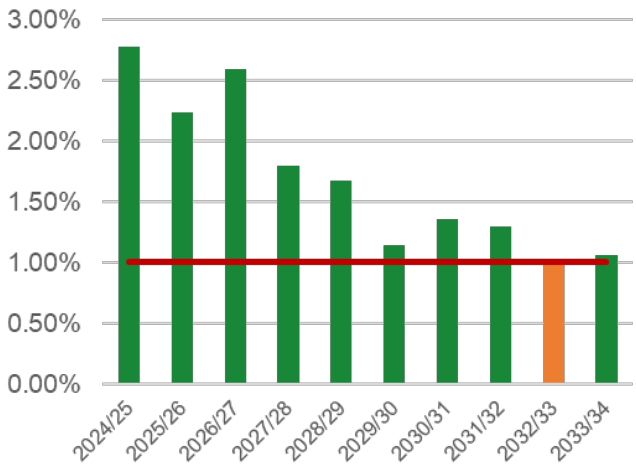
Key principles employed in the financial planning and modelling process include:

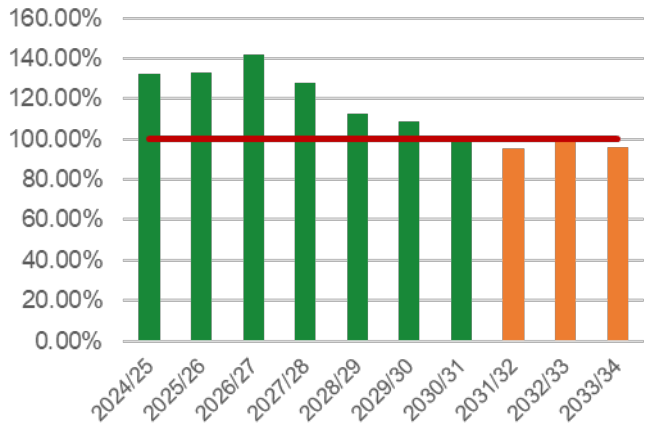
- Financial sustainability
- Maintaining diversity of income sources
- Generating significant operating surpluses
- Maintaining tight control over expenditure and staff numbers
- Delivering best value services, facilities, and infrastructure
- Effective and efficient utilisation of funding sources to fund capital works and asset acquisitions
- Prudent financial investment
- Considering appropriate use of debt, internal borrowing and private financing arrangements

The Long Term Financial Plan continues our commitment to maintain tight control over our financial position and performance, an achievement that has been continually demonstrated through strong operating results. The funds generated from operations are used to commence new initiatives and programs, and to fund delivery of our extensive capital program. However, the suitability of utilising debt and/or private financing will be considered, for appropriate initiatives and projects

The City of Sydney's forecast performance in respect of the mandated Office of Local Government Performance measures over the next 10 years is detailed below. The charts demonstrate performance trends on the basis of forward projections contained in the Long Term Financial Plan, and estimates related to future asset renewal requirements (per the Asset Management Plan).

The graphs plot the annual performance for each ratio shown – while longer term projections generally reflect above-benchmark performance against all measures, one-off impacts can result in minor fluctuations from year to year.

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Operating performance ratio  $\frac{\text{Operating revenue (excluding capital grants and contributions) less operating expenses}}{\text{Operating revenue (excluding capital grants and contributions)}}$	Operating Performance is projected to exceed benchmark over the life of the Long Term Financial Plan. 2024/25, 2028/29 and 2032/33 are all election years, which has a slight unfavourable impact on the ratio result due to additional expenses incurred in running local government elections.
Own source revenue $\frac{\text{Total continuing operating revenue (excluding all grants and contributions)}}{\text{Total operating revenue (including all capital grants and contributions)}}$	The City's Own Source Operating Revenue is already well above the required benchmark level and is forecast to continue to grow as a proportion of total operating revenue. As detailed in the Long Term Financial Plan document, minor incremental growth in the City's rates base and the assumed continuation of the "cap" on developer contributions per new dwelling will result in capital income representing a declining proportion of the City's income base, reflected in the gradual increase in the Own Source Revenue ratio. The ratio may be impacted in any given year by higher-than-expected capital income receipts.

Indicator	Comment / Performance
Building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio  $\frac{Actual\ asset\ renewals}{Required\ renewal\ of\ building\ and\ infrastructure\ assets}$	Rather than utilise depreciation expense as an arbitrary proxy, the required renewal of building and infrastructure assets is instead sourced from the Asset Management Plan within the City's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. Depreciation rates are also re-assessed regularly to reflect appropriate useful lives for assets, but the straight line methodology inevitably presents a limitation. Substantial renewal works are planned for the earlier years of the plan, driven (in part) by strategic upgrade works that deliver a renewal benefit to assets. Underlying recurrent renewal programs focus on prioritising end-of-life assets for renewal and/or replacement.

Next steps

In 2025 we will produce the next version of our environmental, cultural and economic strategies based on the latest research and community engagement responses.

Following the midpoint review of our social sustainability policy, a city for all, we will continue to deliver infrastructure and projects to support an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city.

We will also review the local strategic planning statement that will establish long term planning priorities and actions. The review is planned to be undertaken once the NSW Government releases updated Region and District Plans. We will continue to use all available levers to support an increase in the supply of affordable housing including developer contributions, other planning levers, discounted land sales and grants.

We are reviewing the Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act covering Integrated Planning and Reporting.

We are reviewing recent surveys, research assessments and community engagement activities supporting the development of other City of Sydney strategies and any recent changes in legislation and impacts from other government agencies and key stakeholders. This body of work will be reflected in the next version of our community strategic plan due to be presented to council in mid-2025 together with a new delivery program and supporting resourcing strategies and financial estimates.

Addendum March 2025

Since the State of our city report was noted by Council on 25 November 2024 two data corrections have been identified as follows:

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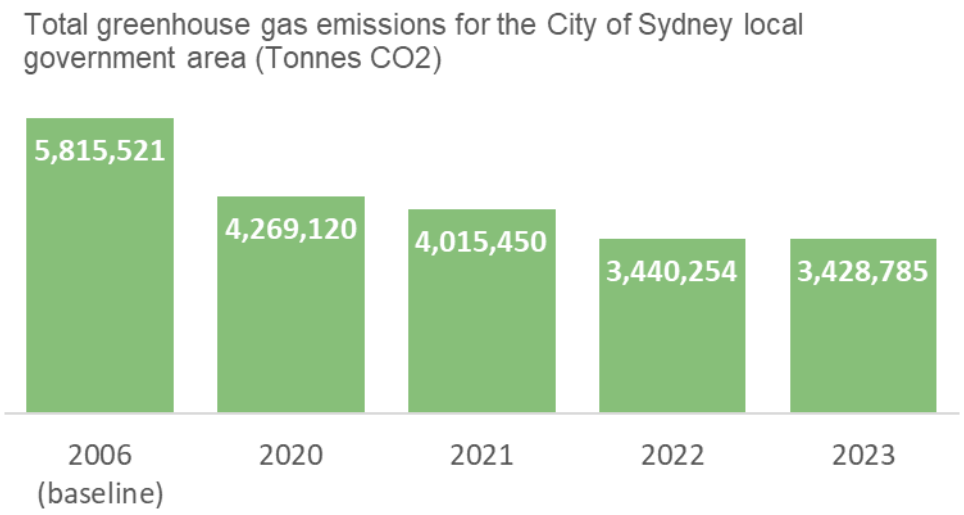
The scale for this chart should be as follows:



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Social housing dwellings total for 2024 corrected to 9,538 in alignment with recently published data.