

16 February 2026

At the conclusion of the Corporate, Finance, Properties
and Tenders Committee

Environment and Climate Change Committee

Agenda

- 1. Confirmation of Minutes**
- 2. Statement of Ethical Obligations and Disclosures of Interest**
- 3. Post Exhibition - Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035**
- 4. Victoria Street Public Domain Upgrade**

Disclaimer, Terms and Guidelines for Speakers at Public Forums

Note: The Office of Local Government has mandated that public forums should not be held as part of a council or committee meeting. Council or committee meetings should be reserved for decision-making by the council or committee of council.

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Members of the public attending a public forum may have their image, voice and personal information (including name and address) recorded, publicly broadcast and archived for the balance of the council's term or at least 12 months after the meeting, whichever is the longer period.

Consent

By attending a public forum, members of the public consent to this use of their image, voice and personal information.

Disclaimer

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Guidelines for City of Sydney Public Forums

1. The City of Sydney Council will hold a public forum prior to meetings of committees of the council for the purpose of hearing oral submissions from members of the public on items of business to be considered at the meetings of committees of the council.
2. Public forums will be held from 2pm for up to one hour, with meetings of committees of the council to commence at 3pm.
3. Public forums are to be chaired by the Lord Mayor or their nominee.
4. To speak at a public forum, a person must first register with the Secretariat in accordance with the information on the City's website. Applications to speak at the public forum must be received by 12pm on the day on which the public forum is to be held, and must identify the item of business on the agenda of the committee meeting the person wishes to speak on, and whether they wish to speak 'for' or 'against' the item. The chairperson will determine the order of speakers at the public forum (generally by order of agenda item and registration), as required.
5. If there are no registrations to speak at a public forum at 12pm on the day on which the public forum is to be held, the public forum will not be required and this will be noted on the City's website.

6. Speakers should avoid repeating what previous speakers have said and focus on issues and information that the Council may not already know. If there is a large number of people interested in the same item speakers should try to nominate 3 representatives to speak on their behalf and to indicate how many people they are representing.
7. Each speaker will be allowed 3 minutes to address the council. Speakers at public forums must not digress from the item on the agenda of the meeting they have applied to address the council on. If a speaker digresses to irrelevant matters, the chairperson is to direct the speaker not to do so. If a speaker fails to observe a direction from the chairperson, the speaker will not be further heard.
8. A councillor (including the chairperson) may, through the chairperson, ask questions of a speaker following their address at a public forum. Questions put to a speaker must be direct, succinct and without argument. The chairperson may limit the number of questions that can be asked of speakers to ensure as many registered participants as possible can be heard.
9. Speakers should address the public forum and Council with respect and refrain from inappropriate behaviour.
10. The chairperson may require people to leave the public forum if they are disrupting the meeting in accordance with Part 15 of the Code of Meeting Practice.
11. Councillors (including the Lord Mayor) must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to any item of business that is the subject of an address at a public forum, in the same way that they are required to do so at a council or committee meeting. The council is to maintain a written record of all conflict of interest declarations made at public forums and how the conflict of interest was managed by the councillor who made the declaration.
12. The rules for the conduct of public forums can be varied from time to time at the discretion of Council to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the public forums. The failure to comply with these Guidelines does not constitute a breach of the Code of Meeting Practice or the Local Government Act 1993 and does not invalidate any subsequent decision of Council.
13. Public forums are recorded and webcast live on the City of Sydney website. Livestreaming is undertaken in accordance with clauses 5.35 to 5.55 of the Code of Meeting Practice.

Item 1.

Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the following meetings of the Environment and Climate Change Committee are submitted for confirmation:

Meeting of 8 December 2025

Item 2.**Statement of Ethical Obligations**

In accordance with section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993, the Lord Mayor and Councillors are bound by the Oath or Affirmation of Office made at the start of the Council term to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people of the City of Sydney and the City of Sydney Council and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

Disclosures of Interest

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the City of Sydney Code of Meeting Practice and the City of Sydney Code of Conduct, Councillors are required to disclose and manage both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any matter on the agenda for this meeting.

In both cases, the nature of the interest must be disclosed.

This includes receipt of reportable political donations over the previous four years.

Item 3.

Post Exhibition - Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035

File No: X087085

Summary

The Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2030 has guided the City of Sydney's waste and resource management over the past 8 years. It focused on 6 priority areas: waste avoidance, increased recycling, litter reduction, planning for waste in developments, future treatment solutions, and better data management.

Of the 35 actions outlined, 29 have been completed or are ongoing, 2 were superseded, and 4 actions have been updated and are included in the City's new strategy. Significant achievements include reducing residential waste per person by 18%, introducing separate food waste collection to over 24,500 households, expanding recycling services to cover over 20 hard-to-recycle items, doubling the recycling rate for waste collected from maintaining our streets, parks and public spaces, removing single-use items from City events, and supporting local circular economy projects with over \$400,000 in grants.

External factors such as new state and federal targets, changes in legislation, global recycling restrictions, increased single-use waste, and infrastructure challenges have prompted the need for a refreshed approach.

More positively, there is also growing momentum and support for a transition towards a more circular economy, such as increased global recognition of circular economy principles, acknowledgment of a landfill crisis in Greater Sydney, the state-wide single-use plastics ban introduced in 2022, recognition of the economic potential of circular systems, and strong local community support for waste reduction.

In response, City staff developed the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026–2035 (the Strategy). This new Strategy outlines 5 strategic directions: championing waste avoidance, boosting reuse and recycling, fostering circular design, keeping the city clean, and building resilient waste systems. It includes 39 targeted actions, such as promoting sustainable consumption, expanding food and textile recycling, supporting small businesses, improving urban waste management, and advocating for stronger infrastructure and policy support.

This strategic shift positions Sydney to lead in waste reduction and circular economy practices while adapting to evolving environmental and regulatory landscapes.

The draft Strategy was approved by Council to be placed on public exhibition for 6 weeks from 24 September to 5 November 2025. Community feedback shows very strong support for the strategy. Our community wants us to help them reduce waste, make recycling easier, keep the city clean and build a more circular local economy. They also want to work with us to keep valuable materials in use for longer.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the submissions received from the community on the exhibited draft Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2025-2035, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (B) Council adopt the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication; and
- (D) Council note the finalisation of the Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2030 noting it is now replaced by the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035.

Attachments

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Attachment A. | Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 |
| Attachment B. | Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 (with tracked changes) |
| Attachment C. | Engagement Report - Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 |

Background

1. The Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan 2017- 2030 was adopted in 2017 and has guided the City's approach to waste and resource management for 8 years.
2. The strategy comprised 6 priority areas including waste avoidance, increasing recycling, reduce litter and illegal dumping, planning for waste in new developments, future treatment solutions and better data management.
3. Targets for the strategy focused on waste recycling and diversion from landfill across our own properties, our public spaces, residential services and commercial businesses within our local area.
4. Progress against targets, development of new services, programs and case studies were provided to Council through regular CEO Updates, Operational Plan reports and our annual Green Report, which is also published on our website.
5. Highlights since 2017 from the implementation of the 35 actions include:
 - (a) residential waste per person reduced from 84kgs to 69kgs per year (18% reduction)
 - (b) separate food waste collections for more than 24,500 households and in selected City of Sydney managed properties
 - (c) expanded collection and drop off recycling services for more than 20 common residential waste streams that cannot be recycled in the yellow bin. These services include mattresses, paints, chemicals, batteries, electronics, large cardboard, bicycles and scooters, clothing, bedding, soft toys, lightbulbs, x-rays, coffee pods, printer cartridges, polystyrene and blister packs
 - (d) doubled the rate of recycling and recovery of waste from maintaining our streets, parks and public spaces, from 26% in 2016/17 to 54% in 2024/25
 - (e) removing reliance on single-use items across our own events and services
 - (f) supported circular economy projects in our local area with more than \$400,000 in grant funding.
6. Since the adoption of the strategy there have been several changes, both within our area and from external influences, that required us to review and update our strategy. The notable external influences include:
 - (a) new state and federal targets for reducing and recycling waste
 - (b) new NSW Government legislation requiring local governments to offer a food waste collection service by July 2030 and relevant businesses to have separated food collection services in place by July 2026
 - (c) international restrictions on exporting recycling
 - (d) continued and significant growth in single use plastics, textiles and electronics

- (e) challenges with changes to NSW Government regulations impacting processing of waste and recycling
 - (f) increases in costs to service expanding material streams.
7. More positively, there is also recognition and investment in making change including:
- (a) global recognition of the need for a more circular approach from leading designers, innovators and governments
 - (b) acknowledgment by the NSW Government of a landfill capacity crisis in Greater Sydney
 - (c) the NSW Government have recognised infrastructure and transfer capacity shortages
 - (d) NSW Government single use plastics ban introduced into legislation in 2022, with additional items pending for 2026 to 2030
 - (e) recognition of economic opportunities from circular economy
 - (f) strong local community support for reducing waste and recycling more.

Waste and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035

8. The new Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2025-2035 (see Attachment A) provides a clear roadmap for reducing waste and fostering circular economy principles.
9. By focusing on waste prevention, recycling, circular design, city cleanliness, and resilient systems, the draft Strategy aims to support Sydney to significantly cut waste, improve resource recovery, and build a more sustainable urban environment.
10. The draft Strategy has 5 strategic directions with each one listed below along with its ambition:
- (a) Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption – alongside us, our communities consume responsibly, reduce waste and embrace circular practices.
 - (b) Boost reuse, repair and recycling – our communities have convenient access to reuse, repair and refurbishment servicers at no greater cost than buying new.
 - (c) Where these options are not yet available, recycling is prioritised over disposal to landfill.
 - (d) Foster circular design – new buildings and spaces are designed with circular principles, so they use fewer new materials, last longer and allow for easy repurposing at end-of-life.
 - (e) Keep our city clean – streets are clean and free of clutter and our environment is protected from the impacts of litter and harmful materials. We adapt our services as Sydney changes and grows.

- (f) Build resilient waste and circular systems – flexible, reliable solutions meet the long-term waste and resource recovery needs of our communities. State and federal policies and regulation allow us to achieve our local ambitions for a more circular system.
11. To fulfil the ambitions of the 5 directions and realise our vision for a more circular economy, the draft Strategy includes 39 focused actions for our organisation and communities. Included in these actions are the following key activities:
- (a) leveraging our buying power to support the shift to a circular economy transition
 - (b) supporting small businesses in our area to become more circular
 - (c) inspiring residents to reduce their waste through targeted communications campaigns
 - (d) acting on textile waste by providing new recycling options for unwearable items and creating more opportunities for our residents to understand and practice sustainable shopping and clothes repair
 - (e) delivering food scraps recycling to all residents and trial new local processing options
 - (f) increasing support for reuse and repair projects through our grants
 - (g) championing the use of circular design in new local developments by creating detailed guidelines to support the building sector
 - (h) tackling our urban waste management challenges with a dedicated program to address problem areas and with creative methods to curb single-use waste and litter
 - (i) providing flexible, reliable services to meet our long-term waste and resource recovery needs
 - (j) advocating for adequate waste infrastructure and circular economy projects.

Targets

12. To allow meaningful measurement of progress to achieving the long-term ambitions of waste reduction and circularity and to reflect changes to the external environment around how waste and resources are managed, the draft Strategy includes the following additions and changes to targets.
13. New waste reduction targets for residential waste, waste from our own properties and commercial and industrial waste. These targets acknowledge that we need to make less waste in the first place as well as reusing materials recovered and diverting from landfill.

14. Extending the previously adopted 90% landfill diversion targets for residential and commercial waste by 5 years from 2030 to 2035. When the targets were adopted in the previous strategy there was a strong expectation that the recycling and resource recovery industry in NSW would be much more mature, in line with other similar jurisdictions globally, however, with delayed investment in the sector and a lack of regulations driving investment there is now an infrastructure development lag.
15. Removal of target for recycling of construction and demolition waste in our area. Collection of meaningful data for this sector at the local government area level has been difficult to achieve. Unlike the commercial sector, which can be measured and extrapolated against regular business activities, construction and demolition activities are highly variable both in instances and volumes.
16. Reducing the 90% landfill diversion target for City streets and public spaces to 60% in 2030 and 70% in 2035 for similar reasons to those outlined for extending the timeline for achieving the residential and commercial targets, that is delayed investment and delivery of recycling and recovery infrastructure in NSW. This group of materials includes some more problematic waste streams such as street sweepings, stormwater materials, public litter and illegal dumping. While there are recycling opportunities for some of these streams, extending to beyond 60% and 70% will require significant investment by industry and it is unclear if there is sufficient demand for processing of these streams.

Public exhibition and engagement

17. The draft Strategy was placed on exhibition between 24 September 2025 and 5 November 2025.
18. It was promoted through Sydney Your Say, emails to over 12,000 recipients, and social media ads, resulting in 3,453 visits to the Sydney Your Say page, 3,803 views of our Facebook video and more than 240,000 impressions from social media advertising.
19. Engagement activities included an online survey, community pop-ups, a stakeholder workshop, and opportunities for written submissions.
20. City staff have prepared a comprehensive engagement report (see Attachment B) detailing each of the engagement activities, the survey responses, information about the respondents and ideas or recommendations put forward. A high-level summary of the engagement activity is provided below.
21. Throughout the consultation period we received 236 pieces of written feedback on the draft strategy through survey responses (159), emails (9), comment boards at community pop sites (engaged with more than 90 community members for 61 comments) and a workshop (7 participants).
22. Respondents mostly live in the City of Sydney local government area (88%), 47% are aged over 55 years, 80% own their own home, 20% are renters and 57% live in an apartment.

23. Across all engagement activities community members expressed very strong support for the draft Strategy. In the survey responses between 85% and 95% of respondents selected 'strongly support' for each direction area. Reasons for the strong support focused on concern for the environment, that the directions and actions were practical and reflected a commonsense approach, and that action to prevent waste and reduce consumption was the most effective way to address waste issues.
24. Other reasons for support for the directions included:
 - (a) Need to plan for waste systems that can cope with demand
 - (b) Community members value repair, reuse and sharing
 - (c) Need to make reuse and recycling easier to access
 - (d) Desire to live in a clean city
 - (e) Belief that the City of Sydney should show strong leadership on waste and the circular economy
 - (f) Education is central to the success of reducing waste
 - (g) Concern about problems we leave for future generations.
25. When asked for suggestions regarding other areas of focus that were important in reducing waste and transitioning to a more circular economy the most mentioned topics included stronger regulations and corporate responsibility, convenient infrastructure for reuse and recycling, reducing single use plastics, education and food scraps services.
26. When asked how we can improve our waste and recycling services the most mentioned topics included increase in services closer to home, reducing confusion about recycling and increasing the availability of recycling drop off services.

Post exhibition edits

27. The engagement activities demonstrated strong support for the Strategy, as drafted, with most of the comments and recommendations already captured within the existing actions. Some recommendations extend beyond the legislated powers of local government in NSW, however, the responses provided will continue to inform our advocacy. As a result, only minor editorial changes, such as refining definitions of resource recovery and updating the strategy dates, to the final Strategy are proposed with no changes to direction areas or actions. Refer Attachment B for a version of the Strategy with the changes marked up.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

28. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress.

This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:

- (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer – the Strategy includes actions to promote waste avoidance, increase reuse, repair and recycling and combat pollution with actions that:
 - (i) support our community to consume responsibly, reduce waste and embrace circular practices (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 1 – Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption)
 - (ii) provide communities with convenient access to reuse, repair and refurbishment services and recycling is prioritised over landfill (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 2 – Boost reuse, repair and recycling)
 - (iii) keep our street clean and free of clutter and our environment is protected from the impacts of litter and harmful materials (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 4 – Keep our city clean).
- (b) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development – the Strategy encourages circular design principles with actions that:
 - (i) promote the design of new buildings and spaces with fewer new materials, that last longer and allow for easy repurposing at end of life (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 3 – Foster circular design).
- (c) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy
 - (i) Trial and test new ideas that commercialise circular economy innovations (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 1 – Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption).
 - (ii) Support capacity building programs focused on waste reduction and circularity for businesses in our area (Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Direction 1 – Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption).

Organisational Impact

29. Council has already approved, in 2024/25, \$8.36M of funds for more cleansing equipment and, in 2025/26, \$1.10M per year for additional cleansing resources. The Strategy does not propose an expansion of the City's ongoing cleansing and resource recovery services or changes to the composition of the businesses units responsible for delivering support for waste reduction and circular economy and implementing the Strategy. Rather the approach to designing waste reduction and circular programs and services will be informed and shaped by the new Strategy, with particular focus on areas of highest need as evidenced by the Strategy.

Risks

30. The Strategy is an evidence-based approach to delivering the community's aspirations and vision. Risk has been managed by ensuring the City's waste reduction, resource recovery and circular materials investments respond to the current issues facing the sector, drawing upon the most current available data and analysis, engagement with industry, and community consultation.
31. The actions presented in the Strategy are within the City's risk appetite which states:
- We recognise the critical importance of environmental protection and sustainability in our operations and decision-making. We are committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment and striving for a more sustainable future. We accept that sometimes environmental protection (e.g. pollution) and environmental sustainability (e.g. cleaner energy) place us at opposite ends of the risk appetite spectrum.
 - We embrace innovative solutions and emerging technologies that enable us to minimise environmental risks and enhance sustainability. We actively explore and invest in sustainable alternatives, renewable energy sources and efficient resource utilisation.
 - Our risk philosophy is centred around achieving a balance between innovation, community and user satisfaction and risk management, ensuring that we meet our strategic objectives while maintaining a robust control environment.
 - We are open to exploring new opportunities and changing service levels to the community, taking into account community expectations, needs and our financial sustainability.
 - We have minimal appetite for more than temporary disruption to our critical service functions, such as waste services.

Environmental

32. The Strategy responds to waste reduction and landfill diversion targets as presented in the draft Community Strategic Plan and the Environmental Strategy 2025-2035 and details the actions we will take to achieve our targets and objectives of increasing reuse, recycling, more sustainable waste management.

Economic

33. The Strategy responds to our aspiration to be a global leader in innovation, technology and green industries and includes actions that support the transition to a green and circular economy.

Financial Implications

34. Actions within this strategy are either provided for in the long-term plan or focus on investigation only. Any future costs would be considered in a future budget cycle as part of the annual development of the City's Long Term Financial Plan which is subject to Council approval.

Relevant Legislation

- 35. Local Government Act 1993.
- 36. Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.
- 37. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

- 38. Work to implement the Strategy will begin immediately upon adoption.

VERONICA LEE

Executive Director City Services

Gemma Dawson, Waste and Circular Strategy Manager

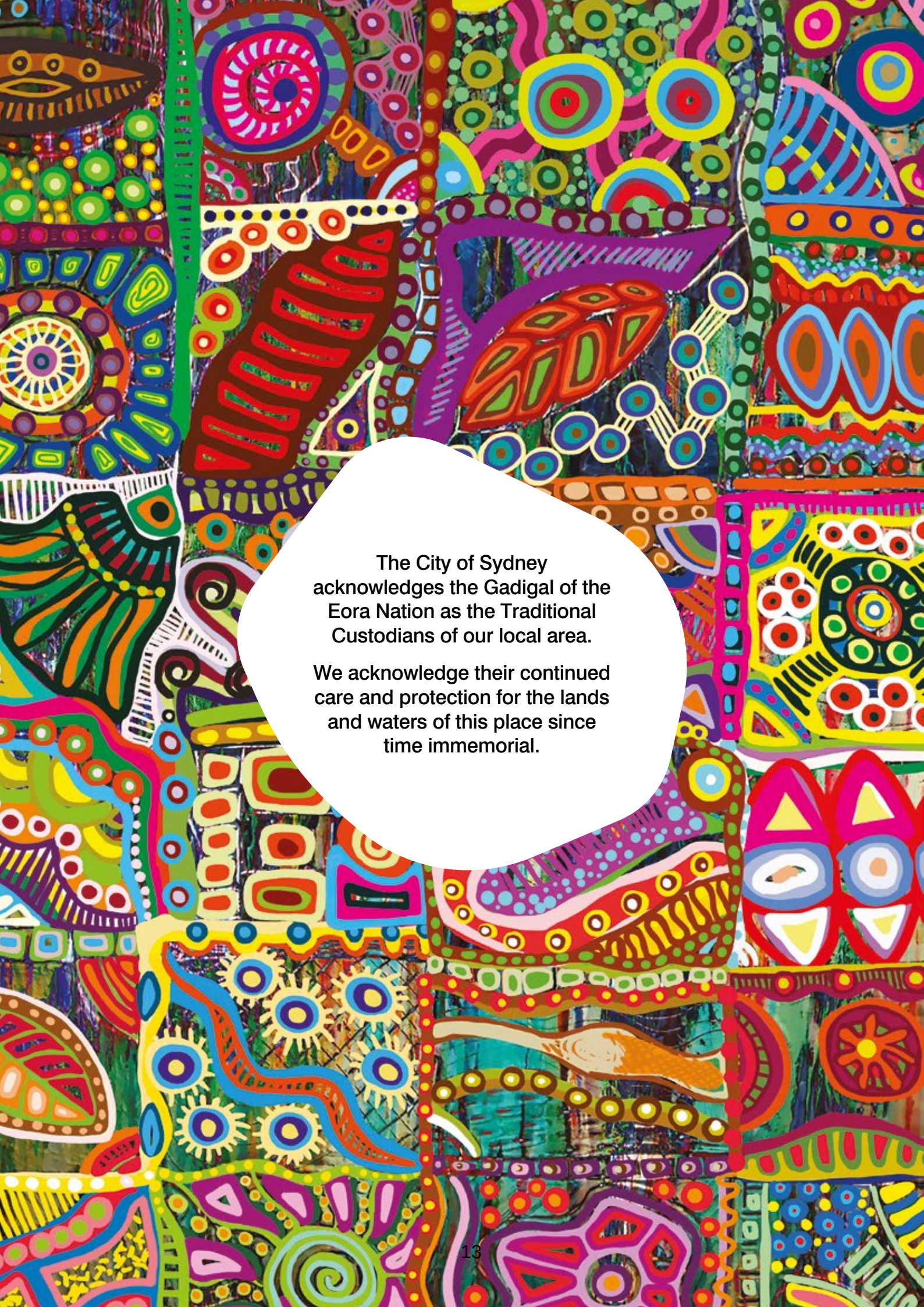
Attachment A

Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035



Final
February 2026

Waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2026–2035



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

We acknowledge their continued
care and protection for the lands
and waters of this place since
time immemorial.

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Message from the Lord Mayor



Sydney's future depends on how resources are used and managed today. Within the city and beyond, producing, consuming and disposing unsustainably depletes finite natural materials, generates waste and harms the environment.

Overcoming these challenges demands a transformative new approach, one rooted in the transition to a circular economy, keeping natural materials in use for as long as possible and designing out waste from the start.

The City of Sydney has long shown bold environmental leadership and we know moving to a circular economy is vital to preserve precious natural resources and meet our waste and emissions reduction goals.

Our communities have told us managing waste sustainably is important to them too. They'd like to see increased access to recycling programs, including for food scraps and more information about proper waste disposal and continued advocacy to reduce the impact of plastic in the environment.

Since 2018, we've awarded more than \$400,000 in grants for circular economy and recycling projects. Our own innovative circular projects include turning food waste from our buildings into soil conditioner for our parks. We've expanded our services for tricky-to-recycle items and partnered with major events to reduce waste – working with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to phase out plastic glitter and balloons is just one example.

Our efforts have also extended beyond local borders because we know waste systems operate across boundaries. Through region-wide initiatives such as Resilient Sydney, we've been working with other councils to push for better waste processing and the state government is now collaborating more closely with councils to solve the issue.

But the challenges before us require even greater action – and local councils can't shoulder this responsibility alone. The federal and state governments must identify, fund and regulate large-scale solutions. Accelerated waste infrastructure at the state level is essential, as are revised regulatory and economic systems that encourage rather than penalise sustainable choices.

At the City of Sydney, we're more than ready to play our part, and as this strategy shows, our focus for the next decade includes ambitious actions to achieve our vision for a circular economy. We'll tackle textile waste, collect food scraps across our area and test scalable new solutions for processing this valuable resource locally. Our NSW-first trial already uses insects to transform food waste. We'll also use our grant programs to boost reuse and repair, support businesses to go circular and champion the use of sustainable design in local developments and within our own.

Building a circular economy in Sydney will require collective effort from governments, businesses and residents. Join us in shaping a thriving circular future, where sustainable principles fuel innovation, resilience and growth.

Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney

Our vision for circular Sydney

In partnership with our communities, we will strive to make Sydney a city where nothing is wasted.



Introduction

Our new waste reduction and circular materials strategy continues the vision of Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050.

It charts a bold course for Sydney as a thriving circular economy, where sustainable production and consumption ensure finite natural materials are valued, cared for and kept in continuous use, safeguarding them for future generations.

In this envisioned future, these practices will enable a substantial reduction in waste and help combat the harms of climate change.

Our communities have made clear this is important to them. They want us to take decisive action to reduce our city's footprint and transition to a more regenerative, resilient local economy, lead by example and continue to govern in a sustainable way.

Since our last waste strategy, we've made significant progress towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient city.

We've increased recycling services available to our residents, promoted reuse and repair through training and events, deepened community education on avoiding waste and boosted funding for organisations driving circular outcomes.

Innovation in our waste processing contracts has ensured more materials are recycled into valuable new products. We use recycled crushed glass to pave our roads and turn food waste from our buildings into soil conditioner for our parks.

Outside our immediate area, we've also been working closely with other councils and state and federal agencies to advocate for policies that better support the recirculation of materials.

Collectively, these actions have helped reduce waste across our own operations, within our residential communities and in the businesses we partner with.



Our free clothes swaps foster community reuse.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney



Our community engagement stalls offer waste avoidance tips to residents and visitors in our area.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

But while we've made strides, there is still more to do. Right now, waste sent to landfill accounts for 10% of our total area emissions. Meeting our adopted city-wide target of net zero emissions by 2035 – critical to a liveable, equitable city – will require much more waste reduction, supported by better management of materials.

The NSW Government has also announced that without new waste solutions, Greater Sydney's landfill capacity will be exhausted within the next decade.¹

As such, this strategy celebrates our successes and sets our ambition for an even more sustainable, resilient future, in which deeply embedded circular principles drive down waste and minimise our city's environmental impact.

To realise this ambition, the strategy outlines clear pathways across 5 directions, each focused on the elements required to transition to a more circular economy.

These include a collective commitment to careful consumption, widespread reuse, repair and recycling, smarter design and construction, careful waste management and good governance.

Across its 5 directions, the strategy discusses the roles of residents, businesses and visitors, along with our role as the local government.

It also speaks to the responsibilities of other levels of government and industry, and highlights our role within broader frameworks, illustrating how our actions contribute to the regional, national and global waste and materials ecosystem.

The strategy outlines how we'll measure success in our shift to a circular economy, presenting a set of ambitious targets for our organisation, residents and local area.

Beyond setting out our bold approach, this strategy provides a chance for us to share knowledge about the circular economy, making it easier for everyone to join us on the path to a more sustainable future.

The circular economy

At present, our society operates on a linear economic model, where natural materials extracted from the earth are used to make new products and often disposed of in landfill, or worse, released directly into the environment.

This take, make, use, dispose approach is driving unsustainable trends in production and consumption, depleting finite natural resources and creating substantial amounts of waste.

It's clear a transformative new approach is needed and over the last decade the circular economy has emerged as this alternative.

The circular economy is a different way to look at production and consumption, challenging the need for new things made from new materials.

Recycling extends the life of products and materials, but a circular economy goes further. It designs products for repeated cycles of reuse, repair and refurbishment, keeping valuable materials in use for as long as possible before recycling or disposal is needed.

Principles of the circular economy

1. Design out waste and pollution

Many products are currently designed without sustainable end-of-life pathways, sealing their eventual fate as landfill waste.

If a new product does need to be created, it should be designed to enable reuse, repair, refurbishment and, as a last resort, recycling.

2. Keep materials at their highest value

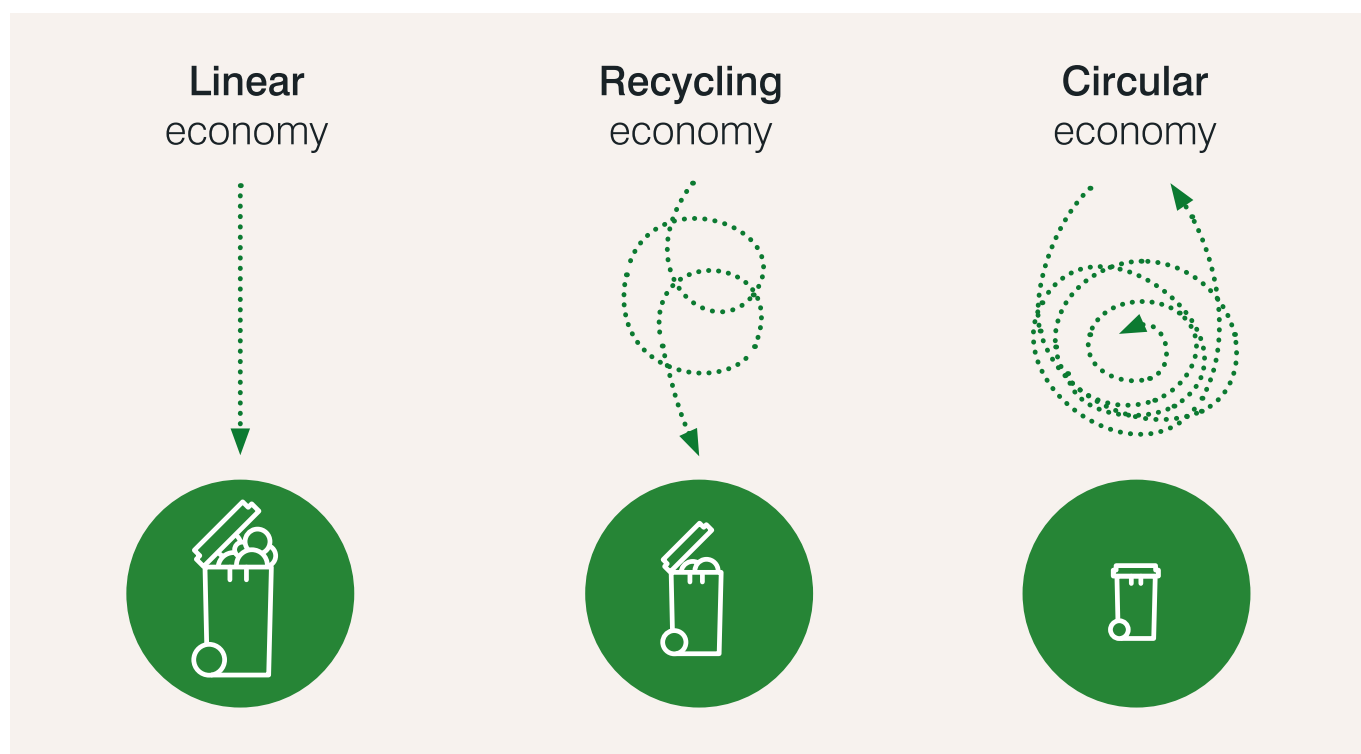
Products and their materials have intrinsic value, which should be maintained through reuse, repair and refurbishment.

Recycling, which requires dismantlement and significantly reduces value, should only take place once other options have been explored.

3. Regenerate nature

A linear economy repeatedly takes raw materials from the earth, depleting and disturbing natural systems.

The focus should move from extraction to regeneration, where nutrient-rich biological material is returned to the earth and nature is allowed to maintain healthy ecosystems.



In the linear economy, many products and materials are only used once then sent to landfill, driving production, consumption and waste. A recycling economy gives items a second life but the circular economy goes further, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible.

How we'll move Sydney to a circular economy

The pathways to achieving our vision for a more circular economy will occur across many different parts of our organisation and city.

We'll focus our efforts through 5 key directions, each with a long-term ambition and an accompanying set of targeted actions.

Each direction represents a distinct approach to the elements needed to create a more circular economy, including a shared commitment to responsible consumption, broad recirculation of materials, better design, careful waste management and good governance.



Key steps

To fulfil the ambitions of our 5 directions and realise our vision for a more circular economy, we'll carry out 39 focused actions for our organisation and communities. Included in these actions are the following key activities:

- **Choosing suppliers and products** that support the shift to a circular economy.
- **Supporting small businesses in our area** to become more circular by providing access to training and grants.
- **Inspiring our residents to reduce their waste** through targeted communications campaigns.
- **Acting on textile waste** by providing new recycling options for unwearable items and creating more opportunities for our residents to understand and practice sustainable shopping and clothes repair.
- **Extending our residential food scraps recycling program** and trialling new innovations for processing this valuable resource locally.
- **Increasing support for reuse and repair projects** through our grants.
- **Championing the use of circular design in new local developments** by creating detailed guidelines to support the building sector.
- **Tackling incorrect waste disposal in problem areas** and using creative ways to cut down single-use items and litter.
- **Continuing to provide flexible, reliable waste and recycling services** that meet the long-term needs of our growing and changing communities.
- **Advocating for the accelerated development of adequate waste infrastructure** and for projects that support a circular economy.



We'll work to boost reuse and repair in our area.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

How we'll measure success

To keep us aligned with the long-term ambitions of our 5 directions, we've set a series of targets that will allow us to meaningfully measure our progress.

By June 2030	By June 2035
For our organisation:	
90% diversion from landfill with 50% source separated recycling from our managed properties	90% diversion from landfill with 60% source separated recycling from our managed properties
60% resource recovery of waste from our office strip-outs and fit-outs	70% resource recovery of waste from our office strip-outs and fit-outs
20% reduction in total waste generated from our managed properties (June 2019 baseline)	25% reduction in total waste generated from our managed properties (June 2019 baseline)
90% resource recovery of construction and demolition waste generated and managed by us	95% resource recovery of construction and demolition waste generated and managed by us
60% resource recovery of waste from our parks, streets and public places	70% resource recovery of waste from our parks, streets and public places
For our residents:	
35% source separated recycling of residential waste	40% source separated recycling of residential waste
80% resource recovery of residential waste	90% resource recovery of residential waste
10% reduction in total residential waste generation per capita (June 2023 baseline)	15% reduction in total residential waste generation per capita (June 2023 baseline)
For our local area:	
80% resource recovery of commercial and industrial waste	90% resource recovery of commercial and industrial waste
10% reduction in total commercial and industrial waste generation (June 2019 baseline)	15% reduction in total commercial and industrial waste generation (June 2019 baseline)

Notes:

- All targets are weight based.
- Resource recovery means taking useful materials out of the waste stream so they can be reused, recycled, or turned into energy.

The current waste landscape

Waste and materials in our area today

Our local government area is one of the largest and fastest growing in Australia.

Home to nearly 245,000 residents today and an anticipated 27,000 more by 2035,² our area also hosts around 22,000 businesses and 520,000 jobs.³ In total, the city is used by an estimated 1 million people each day.

This scale of activity generates a broad range of waste, and it's important to understand the main sources, the materials involved and where it goes. This highlights where future efforts to reduce waste and recirculate materials are best focused.

Our organisational waste

We generate waste in our buildings and from our construction work to maintain and upgrade our streets and public spaces.

Since these areas are under our control, we can closely manage the type and volume of waste produced, as well as what happens to it.

At our buildings, waste currently totals around 950 tonnes each year and consists of materials like food, paper and packaging. We divert more than 90% of it from landfill and are now focused on securing higher value for these materials through increased recycling.

Our construction and demolition projects generate about 28,000 tonnes of waste each year, largely made up of materials such as asphalt, concrete, pavers and steel. The recycling rate is very high and we are committed to maintaining this as well as exploring more ways to reduce and reuse these materials.

Residential and public place waste

Waste is also produced by our residents and in the public places we manage.

While we don't have the same direct control over this waste, we are responsible for its collection, and can influence volumes and reduce disposal by educating residents and visitors.

Our residents currently generate around 64,000 tonnes of waste each year. About 65% of this goes into red lid bins and is later processed to extract metals for recycling, while the rest is collected for recycling and recovery through our yellow lid bin, pick-up and drop-off services.

Food is the most prevalent material in the red lid bin, along with recyclable items such as metal, glass and paper. In the yellow lid bin, these standard recyclable items are most common, but they're sometimes accompanied by contaminants like textiles and bagged items.

Meanwhile, electronics, textiles and large cardboard are the most common materials collected in our pick-up and drop-off recycling services, which focus on items that can't be recycled in the yellow lid bin.

Around 50% of our residential waste is diverted from landfill.

In the public places we manage, around 8,000 tonnes of waste is currently produced each year. This includes waste placed in our street litter bins, collected from our streets and parks, and cleaned from our stormwater drains.

The waste in these areas is a mix of organic materials, packaging and illegally dumped bulkier items such as furniture and tyres, and just over 50% of it is diverted from landfill.

Commercial and construction waste

Local businesses and construction projects generate waste as well.

We don't control or collect this waste, but we do recognise its significant impact and strive to influence reduction, reuse and recycling.

Among businesses in our area, we estimate 567,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste is generated each year.

This contains a variety of materials, mainly metals, plastics, food, paper, cardboard and wood, and around 47% is recycled while the remainder goes to landfill.

More than 300,000 tonnes of materials can be reduced, reused or recycled in the future.

Alongside this, we estimate more than 1 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste is produced in our area each year.

Bricks, concrete and soil make up the bulk of this waste, and while over 75% is recycled, this sector also represents significant opportunities for further reduction and reuse.

Waste in the circular economy

Moving to a circular economy is essential, but the process won't be quick or perfect.

During and after the shift, there will still be items without pathways for reuse, repair, refurbishment or recycling.

This means our communities will still rely on many of the waste, recycling and cleansing services we provide.

While we might expect to see a reduction in waste volumes and to adapt our service levels appropriately, we will continue to provide the essential support our communities need.

Control

Our buildings



950t

Our construction and demolition



28,000t

Manage and influence

Our managed parks, streets and public spaces



8,000t

Our residents



64,000t

Influence

Local area commercial and industrial



567,000t

Local area construction and demolition



over 1Mt

One year's worth of waste in our area and where we can control, manage and influence pathways for it. Data current at 2023/24.



We play a crucial role in managing waste. Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Waste responsibilities

In Australia, responsibility for managing and reducing waste is split across federal, state and local governments.

The federal and state governments make waste management laws and set national and state waste reduction targets, which are often similar.

Waste is also regulated by the state government, using mechanisms that include a levy to discourage landfilling.

Local governments are responsible for helping to achieve the national and state targets for the waste streams we collect.

We also have our own waste reduction targets for our organisation and communities.

The ambition of the national and state targets is welcome, but we know the 2025 targets will not be met and it is unlikely that many of the 2030 targets will be achieved on time.

The federal and state governments must do more to identify, fund and regulate large, scalable solutions.

National waste reduction targets⁴

1. Ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres
2. Reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030
3. 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030
4. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry
5. Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025
6. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030

NSW waste reduction targets⁵

1. Reduce total waste generated by 10% per person by 2030
2. Have an 80% average recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030
3. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry
4. Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025
5. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

Any change brings challenges, and as we transition to a circular economy, we'll need to navigate a range of issues and considerations.



Product design and disposal issues

At present, many products are designed with landfill as the only end-of-life option. Plus, even if better options like recycling are considered, this can be hindered by collection challenges and costs to update industry infrastructure, which can't recycle many of the complex products in use today.



Regulatory and policy barriers

Existing federal and state policies fall short in supporting circularity, leaving the reuse, repair and recycling industries underfunded compared to those that extract raw materials from the earth. One result is that recycling can often cost more than landfill disposal, even with state landfill levies in place.



The appeal of the new and convenient

Since current systems don't adequately support reuse, repair and recycling, it's often cheaper and easier for consumers to buy new products instead. Reuse and repair practices aren't yet normalised either, so new products can be more appealing even if they're not the sustainable choice.



The realities of city living

About 80% of our residents live in apartments,⁶ creating competing demands for space. This can make it harder to reuse, repair and recycle. Plus, in dense urban areas like ours, there's less space to grow food and to compost.



A growing and changing city

Our population is growing and changing, which may increase resource use and waste. It will also create more competition for space on the street. This increased competition, coupled with our city-wide push to expand walking and cycling areas for better accessibility and lower emissions, will present new complexities for collecting and managing waste.

Opportunities

Although there will be challenges, transitioning to a circular economy will bring profound benefits to our area – environmental, social and economic.



Better environmental outcomes

Widespread circular practices will benefit our local environment and reduce our global impact, resulting in fewer emissions, less pollution, and protection of natural resources and biodiversity.



Cost and resource savings

When local businesses and organisations go circular, they'll find smart ways to save money and cut costs. This could be by using repurposed materials, sharing equipment or making products that last longer and are easier to fix.



New local jobs and markets

With some support, businesses operating on circular principles will be able to buy and sell at scale. This will create new jobs and markets, boosting our economy and building community wealth.



Greater innovation

The shift to a circular economy will drive radical innovation as systems are rethought, redesigned and rebuilt in a circular way. It will create new design methods, new processes and new ways for organisations to collaborate.



More connected communities

In many ways, the transition to a circular economy will happen at a person-to-person level, bringing together individuals to preserve resources and reduce waste. This will create more engaged and connected communities.



Sustainable local food systems

Transitioning to a circular economy will support the development of sustainable local food systems, where produce is grown locally with minimal impact and any waste is used to nourish the earth.



Increased local resilience

Circular businesses will rely less on international suppliers for materials and resources, making them less vulnerable to global trade issues, pandemics and other large-scale shocks. Localised production hubs and food systems will make our communities more resilient to shocks and challenges too.



Direction 1: Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption

'We envision the city as a leader in reversing climate change and restoring the natural environment by giving back more than it takes.'

Sydney 2050 Citizens' Jury⁷

Our ambition

Alongside us, our communities consume responsibly, reduce waste and embrace circular practices.



Responsible consumption in action.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Why this is important

The current economic model of take, make, use, dispose has fostered the misconception that raw natural materials are in endless supply.

As a result, products are often made from new rather than recycled materials and designed without sustainable end-of-life pathways, with few regulatory or financial barriers to deter this.

Similarly, consumers are rarely prompted to reflect on the impact of their purchases or to opt for more sustainable alternatives.

This in turn creates considerable waste and other environmental impacts. Nearly 30% of all local consumption-related emissions are linked to the purchase of goods and services.

To keep these impacts from escalating – and ideally, to reduce them – there must be a stronger shared awareness of making and choosing more sustainable products, plus the right support to do it as our city grows. Also essential is an understanding that these alternatives can prevent waste and other environmental harms.

This must all be rooted in circular economy thinking, with broad recognition that materials are finite, valuable and require wise use to support current and future needs.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're championing waste avoidance and careful consumption in our area:

- Turning food waste from our offices into fertiliser for our parks.
- Replacing paper towels with hand dryers in our bathrooms and single-use serveware with reusables at many events.
- Equipping our residents with waste avoidance knowledge through community information stalls, webinars, communications campaigns, a tailored online Q&A service and a search tool.
- Upskilling our residents about localised, low-waste food production at Sydney City Farm, our urban agriculture site.
- Working with industry to increase circularity and reduce waste in commercial offices, hotels, entertainment venues and more.
- Awarding grants for circular economy and waste avoidance ideas, such as an accelerator program for circular economy startups.

What we want in the future

Reduced consumption of products made from new materials, without loss of consumer convenience or economic growth.

We want to use our procurement power to drive change in supply chains and service delivery models, so products and services used in our area are created and provided in a more sustainable, circular way.

Empowering local businesses, big and small, is also crucial for bold action on circularity and avoiding waste. Alongside this, we want to support broad innovation and collaboration on circular projects, fostering better practices and strengthening social cohesion.

Similarly, more education and support will deepen our communities' understanding of responsible consumption, waste avoidance and other circular practices, and make it easy for anyone to participate.

We also want to offer opportunities for our residents to understand and benefit from natural and regenerative systems, as these aid greatly in avoiding waste.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Review the goods and services we procure to see where we can consider alternative models that avoid buying new.
- Identify procurement mechanisms to support the development of circular economy systems.
- Develop guidance about how to choose furniture and furnishings that incorporate circular principles for design, use and end-of-life.
- Investigate opportunities to further reduce reliance on single-use items.
- Identify mechanisms across procurement and design to increase circularity and minimise disposal of textiles.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create targeted communications campaigns that inspire our residents to reduce their waste.
- Increase opportunities for our residents to grow appropriate, nutritious food and to compost at home.
- Create convenient opportunities for our residents to locally share and swap household items.
- Maintain waste avoidance education and engagement activities for our residents, schools and community groups.
- Support capacity-building programs focused on waste reduction and circularity for businesses in our area.
- Showcase emerging circular economy innovations in our area and help businesses and organisations connect and collaborate.
- Trial and test new ideas that commercialise circular economy innovations.
- Collaborate with government and industry to reduce waste and promote circular solutions through our sustainability partnerships.

Snapshots of success



Sustainable office fit-outs are an impactful way to reduce waste.
Photo: Stephanie Zingsheim / City of Sydney

Turning the tables on office fit-out waste

Australia generates at least 30,000 tonnes of commercial furniture waste each year – and 95% of it ends up in landfill.⁸

This trend is fuelled by a few factors, including inflexible design and an overuse of parts that are hard to repair, reuse or recycle.

Recognising this problem in our own city, the Better Buildings Partnership stepped up.

Guided by us, the partnership includes leading property owners and influencers, and since 2011, we've worked together to make Sydney's buildings more sustainable.

In 2023, the partnership asked industry stakeholders about the challenges of office fit-out waste, and based on these findings, teamed up with the Green Building Council of Australia to create a new toolkit for circular office fit-outs.

Aimed at office fit-out project teams, this toolkit presents circular, sustainable design strategies to prevent waste at every phase of the process, from pre-design and concept design to the detailed plans.

Inspiring and useful, the toolkit is helping pave the way for more circular fit-outs in our area.

Working on an office fit-out?
Make it low-waste with the circular toolkit.



Our food scraps become fertiliser for our parks.
Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney



Revolve ReCYCLING save bikes from landfill.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

From food waste to fertiliser

A wide-scale food scraps recycling program is helping us manage our waste.

Trialing and scaling for success

In 2018, 2 of our properties began a food scraps recycling trial, which helped cut their monthly landfill waste by 30%.

Encouraged by these results, we've now introduced food scraps recycling at 12 properties. The scraps are taken to a processing facility south of Sydney and given a second life as compost, soil or mulch.

Exploring a localised approach

Building on this success, we began to explore on-site food scraps recycling, and in 2021 we bought food dehydrators to turn leftovers from 3 of our properties into soil conditioner for our parks.

The units processed 8,250kg in their first full year of operation, and this localised, circular project has also helped cut our transport emissions, since we now need to send fewer scraps away for recycling.

Supporting green business transformation

Our grants help local small businesses and startups explore circular practices and operate more sustainably.

Tech startup Greener has developed a digital tool that helps small businesses make green choices. The tool is now used by many businesses in our area, from restaurants and bars to homeware stores.

Not-for-profit Revolve ReCYCLING ran a pilot to collect and redeploy unwanted bikes in our area. The pilot was a success and the Revolve team now collects up to 500 bikes each month to refurbish, rehome or recycle.

Startup space Fishburners unveiled Australia's first accelerator program for early-stage circular economy businesses. Working on exciting ideas for textiles, technology and more, the 12 participating startups received mentoring, education and chances to connect with industry experts and investors.

Got a bright idea about how to fuel the circular economy? [Apply for a grant.](#)



Hands-on learning at Sydney City Farm.
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Sydney City Farm: cultivating sustainable food systems

Sydney City Farm is a place for our communities to connect with nature and learn more about localised, low-waste food production.

Located in St Peters, this 5,000 square metre urban farm hosts events throughout the year, from workshops, talks and webinars to school group sessions and family-friendly open days.

All activities speak to the unique needs of our communities, with topics like urban composting and worm farming, creating edible gardens in rental homes and growing bush food in cities.

Regular guided farm walks also introduce concepts such as seasonal planting, which is important for growing delicious produce in a low-impact way.

The farm runs a large volunteer program too, allowing interested locals to gain planting, weeding and harvesting experience.

Each year, volunteers help grow around 400kg of seasonal, organic fruit and vegetables, all donated to local charities.

A vibrant, sustainable alternative to large-scale food systems, Sydney City Farm gives our communities the knowledge and skills to make more sustainable choices themselves.

**Want to develop your gardening skills
and learn how to grow food?
Get involved at Sydney City Farm.**



Direction 2: Boost reuse, repair and recycling

'The most sustainable product is
one that already exists.'

Adam Siegel⁹

Our ambition

Our communities have convenient access to reuse, repair and refurbishment services at no greater cost than buying new. Where these options are not yet available, recycling is prioritised over disposal to landfill.



Free clothes repair workshop for our residents.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Why this is important

Creating new products demands extracting finite materials from the earth – an inherently unsustainable process, especially at current rates of production and consumption.

Producing goods also creates environmental harm, often requiring large amounts of water, chemicals and energy.

The most effective way to reverse this is to recirculate existing materials and products for as long as possible, reducing the need for new, but at present, the systems to support this aren't mature enough.

As a result, reuse and repair are often less accessible and more costly than buying new, while recycling practices are still developing.

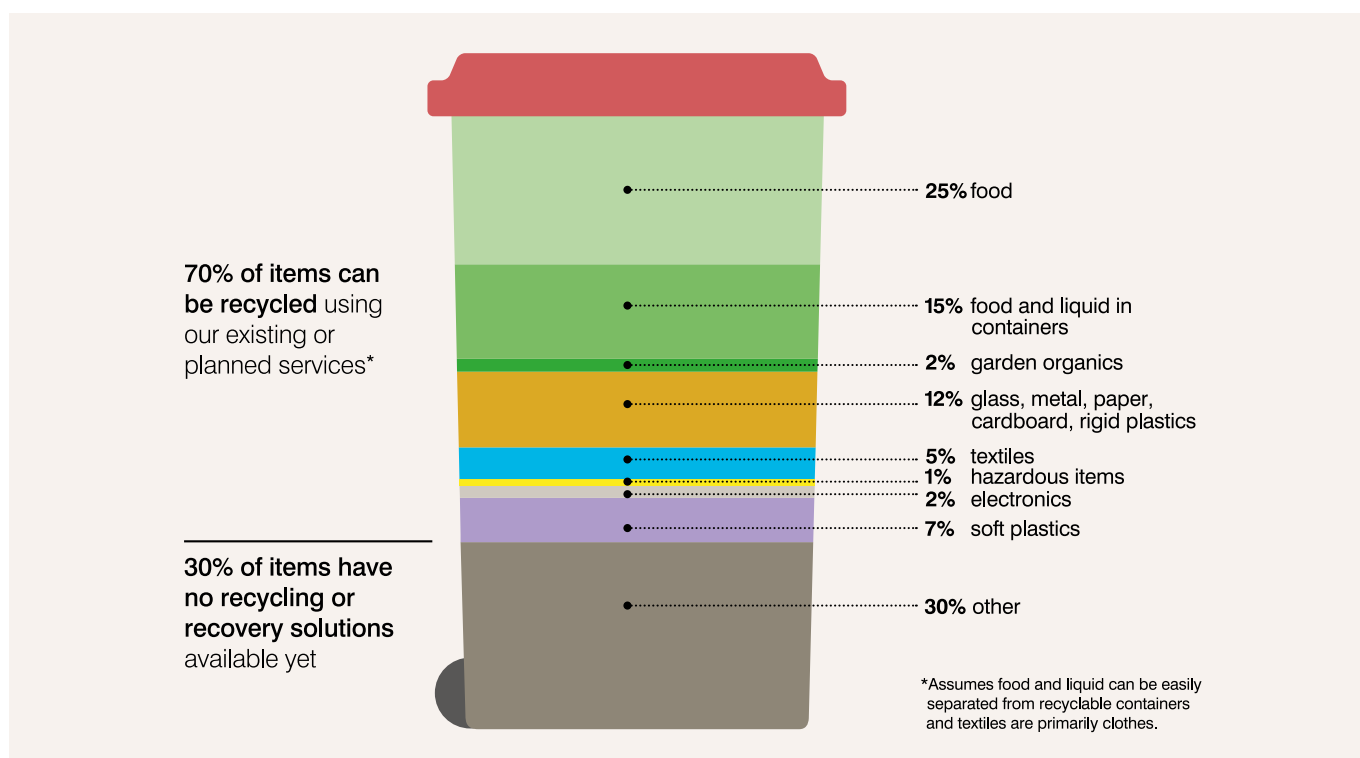
We can see this in our own area, where audits showed more than 25% of the furniture left out for household bulky waste pick-up is suitable for reuse. We also know our residents' red lid bins frequently contain recyclable items like glass, cardboard and electronics.

All this underscores the urgent need for more entrenched, accessible reuse, repair and recycling systems, bolstered by greater community awareness and participation.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're fostering reuse, repair and recycling in our area:

- Reusing furniture and office equipment and recycling our electronics, employee uniforms and more.
- Using recycled materials in building major roads, cycleways and footpaths.
- Hosting reuse and repair events for our residents, including clothes swaps, toy swaps and mending workshops.
- Providing residents with pick-up and drop-off options to recycle tricky items like electronics, paint and polystyrene.
- Auditing residential bin contents to identify where extra recycling options could be provided.
- Awarding grants to organisations working on reuse, repair and recycling, including a furniture rehoming charity, a furniture repair workshop and a design practice developing recycled yarn.



Many items placed in red lid bins could be recycled instead. Percentages for item groups add to 99%, reflecting minor rounding adjustments. Data based on bin audits completed in 2023.

What we want in the future

Broad, convenient and cost-effective access to reuse, repair and refurbishment services, helping drive demand, boost participation and grow repair and refurbishment skills across our area.

We also want to make it easier for our residents to effectively participate in our recycling services. These include our kerbside yellow lid bin and food scraps recycling services, plus our Return and Earn stations and pick-up and drop-off options for tricky-to-recycle items.

Alongside this, we'll aim to keep adapting and evolving our services to meet the changing needs of our residents and the items they use, which may eventually require disposal.

We're already set to expand our recycling services for unwearable textiles and we'll seek to reintroduce soft plastics recycling as soon as the necessary industry infrastructure is in place.

To become circular, our society needs to both keep recycling and use more recycled products – so we also want to help create a thriving market for recycled materials.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Measure and report on the recycled content used in major construction materials we buy.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create pathways to support increased reuse, repair and refurbishment in our area, including grants and a furniture rehoming trial.
- Advocate for suppliers of co-living and on-campus accommodation to explore alternative models such as leasing for furniture and home appliances.
- Extend residential food scraps collection across our area by 2030, in line with the state government mandate.
- Expand opportunities for our residents to recycle tricky items such as unwearable textiles.
- Grow tailored programs to increase participation and reduce contamination in recycling services for apartment buildings and social housing in our area.
- Explore opportunities to expand Return and Earn collection points in our area.

Snapshots of success



Learning more about reuse and repair will help reduce waste to landfill.
Photo: Alec Smart / The Bower

Inspiring new skills and habits

The Bower is an award-winning Sydney charity that champions reuse and repair through workshops, courses, events and more.

We've proudly supported The Bower since 2014, and in 2023 and 2024, we gave a grant to help its team present Australia's first Festival of Repair.

Held in Redfern, this trailblazing 2-week festival was designed to build new skills and inspire new habits, so more items are repaired and reused rather than sent to landfill.

At hands-on workshops and demonstrations led by skilled local craftspeople, festival attendees learnt how to repair their clothes, electronics, furniture, bikes and musical instruments.

Hundreds of attendees traded preloved fashion at a clothes swap and others enjoyed a weekend market day, discovering recycled and upcycled treasures and meeting our waste avoidance educators.

Sustainable design methods were showcased at the festival too, with expert talks about tiny homes and how to use reclaimed and recycled materials in new building projects.

The festival welcomed around 1,500 people and received great community feedback.

Tricky recycling made simple

Products and packaging have become far more complex in recent decades, but the mainstream recycling industry hasn't caught up yet.

This has made for lots of tricky items our residents can't recycle in the yellow lid bin – and to stop them from going to landfill, we've had to think outside the box.

Charting new paths for tricky items

We began providing our residents with ways to recycle tricky items more than 10 years ago.

Quarterly drive-through drop-offs for electronics, yearly drop-offs for chemicals and 10 walk-up recycling stations for batteries, mobile phones and light bulbs helped our residents live more sustainably.

Then, as products and packaging kept evolving, our residents told us they'd like more ways to recycle more items – so we got to work.

New services to meet new needs

In 2020, we revamped and relaunched our quarterly drop-off event as Recycle It Saturday. We also developed a doorstep pick-up service for residents to recycle tricky items from home.

In 2022, we updated our recycling stations at 16 community locations and rounded out the year by launching a walkable weekly drop-off centre at our Bay Street depot in Ultimo.

We worked hard to ensure these expanded services could accept a wide range of items, and now our residents can recycle polystyrene, clothes, metals, x-rays, electronics, coffee pods, blister packs and more.

With great feedback and uptake, these services have already helped residents save over 345 tonnes of items from landfill.

Have old electronics, clothes, paint or polystyrene? Try our recycling services for tricky items.



Recycle It Saturday.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney



Doorstep recycling service.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



Ultimo recycling pop-up.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



Our uniform recycling program has had a great response.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Fashioning a sustainable future

Clothing in Australia has a huge carbon footprint, largely due to the unsustainable ways clothes are made, used and disposed of.

It will take everyone to reverse this trend, and as a local council we can both empower our residents and lead by example with sustainable choices.

Helping our residents reuse and repair

From 2021 to 2024, we held a series of clothing reuse and repair events for our residents.

Nearly 2,000 people attended our 10 clothes swaps and 34 repair and upcycling workshops, swapping over 1.5 tonnes of items and learning easy ways to extend the life of their clothes.

Encouraged by the response, we plan to continue these events and have enjoyed sharing lessons with recent community-led swaps, helping contribute to their success too.

Recycling uniforms

In 2023 and 2024, we trialled a uniform recycling program with our cleansing and parks teams.

We collected and sent the teams' old uniforms to an Australian textile recovery company, who sorted the uniforms for reuse or recycling.

Good condition, non-branded garments were donated to charity, while items in a poor state or with logos were recycled into infill fibre for pet bedding, furniture and insulation.

We collected more than 500kg of uniforms during the trial and have now made it a permanent program, with plans to deepen its impact by expanding to more teams in our organisation.



Direction 3: Foster circular design

'The age of the circular economy is coming, and the built environment has a substantive opportunity to contribute to its development.'

Green Building Council of Australia¹⁰

Our ambition

New buildings and spaces are designed with circular principles, so they use fewer new materials, last longer and allow for easy repurposing at end-of-life.



This Zetland childcare centre repurposes old hospital buildings.
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Why this is important

In Australia, construction generates the same volume of emissions as the transport industry.¹¹ It also produces the most waste.¹²

But while the transport industry is accelerating towards electrification, the construction sector has been slower to adopt more sustainable practices.

Coupled with a predicted increase in demand for development, this means the impact of the construction industry is only set to grow.

We'll see this demand in our own area, where projected population growth will require an increase in housing, community facilities and open spaces to ensure the city remains a liveable and enjoyable place.

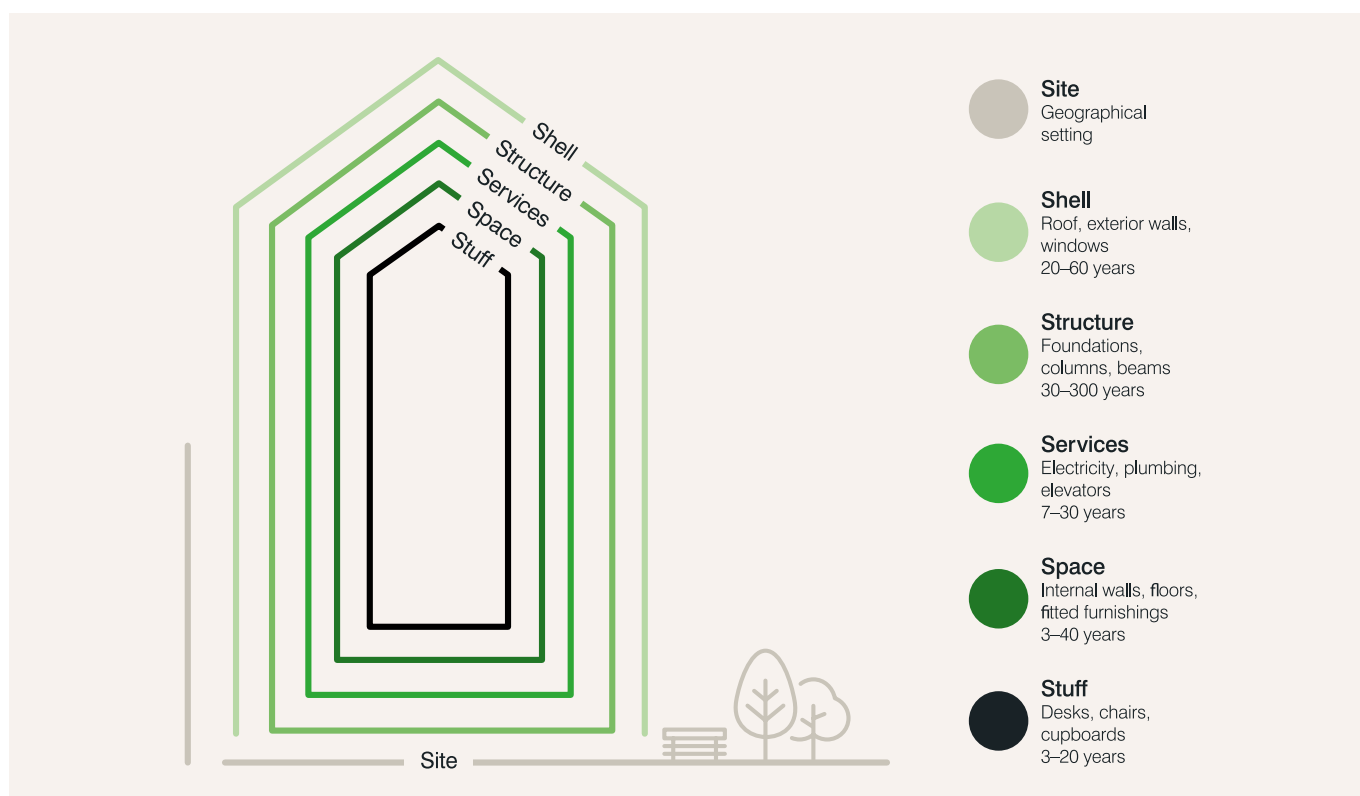
In the next 5 years alone, we'll seek to support nearly 19,000 new homes being built in our area, as tasked by the state government.¹³

With intensive new construction inevitable, a bold, broad embrace of circular design is more important than ever, so the negative effects of this construction can be minimised as much as possible.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're fostering circular design in our area:

- Developing guidelines to ensure our community buildings are designed to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Requiring circular design considerations in our major new depot redevelopment.
- Creating circular design guidelines for architects, developers and contractors.
- Updating our local planning rules so underused city basements can be more easily repurposed for urban agriculture.
- Working with industry to champion circular office fit-outs in our area.
- Awarding grants for circular design related ideas, such as using smart design technology to reduce building material waste and creating circular fit-out guidelines for retail and hospitality venues.



We want to see more buildings designed as sets of largely independent layers based on lifespan, enabling disassembly not demolition and allowing materials to be preserved for reuse. Diagram adapted from Arup.

What we want in the future

A consistent approach to circular design at the federal, state and local levels, with all parties moving towards the same goals.

We want to champion the circular design transition in our own projects and guide the move for other developments, ensuring that as our population grows, the focus is on designing and building better, rather than on simply creating more.

This means that when we interact with those looking to build in our area, we'll encourage circular design strategies such as using repurposed, low-carbon materials or treating each building component as a separate layer to allow for flexible use and easier disassembly, preserving materials and reducing the need for demolition.

We also want to promote the importance of good design in enabling natural regeneration and sustainable food systems – essential elements for a circular economy. Our goal is to use our planning guidance and policies to create an environment where design that prioritises nature can succeed.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Review our design and construction activities to better incorporate circular design principles.
- Create a circular fit-out process for refurbishment of our managed properties.
- Audit materials for our major properties and assets projects to increase opportunities to retain, reuse and recycle.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Promote and encourage the use of circular design principles by developers, architects and construction contractors.
- Advocate for improved circular design standards in state and national built environment policies and for their use in significant planning projects in our area.
- Support the growth of urban agriculture within a sustainable food system and investigate how we might further design and plan for this in our area.

Snapshots of success



Our new guidelines will encourage circular design in our area.
Photo: Jamie Williams / City of Sydney

Stimulating circular design in local developments

Regularly interacting with those looking to design and build in our area makes us well-positioned to share knowledge and encourage circular design.

To achieve this, we're creating circular design guidelines for architects, designers, developers and building contractors.

Inspiring and useful, the guidelines will lay out the benefits of circular design, offer practical application strategies and show how it can benefit all parts of a project.

The guidelines will also introduce the build in layers concept, which enables deconstruction instead of demolition and allows materials to be preserved and reused.

Drawing on insights from design consultants, property developers and building companies, the guidelines will be tailored for local relevance and useful for new and existing developments of all types and sizes.

Circular design at work in our area

20 Martin Place

An unremarkable 1970s tower was transformed into a high-performing, 6-Green Star office building.

The building was stripped back to its steel frame, with tonnes of hazardous asbestos removed in the process.

A highly durable, environmentally responsive new façade was built on the original frame, using sustainable materials such as lower-carbon concrete. The design also incorporated flexible layouts and floorplans.

The project ultimately retained 5,500 tonnes of structural steel, achieved a 40% embodied carbon saving and set a world-class standard for energy efficiency in commercial buildings.

Camperdown Childcare

Circular design helped turn an old warehouse into a state-of-the-art childcare centre.

Reusable original elements, such as the roof trusses, were retained to minimise new construction and acknowledge site history.

New elements were designed as prefabricated modules, allowing for flexibility and reuse plus a more efficient build.

Low-impact materials helped reduce emissions, and a large roof cut-out created an outdoor play space in a great example of creative reuse.

With on-site construction and fit-out completed in just 12 weeks, an airy, adaptable centre ideal for early learning and development came to life.



Upgrades begin at 20 Martin Place. Photo: Built



20 Martin Place stripped back to its steel frame. Photo: Built



20 Martin Place transformed through circular design. Photo: Built



Direction 4: Keep our city clean

‘Our streets and public spaces are
the face we show the world.’

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050¹⁴

Our ambition

Streets are clean and free of clutter and our environment is protected from the impacts of litter and harmful materials. We adapt our services as Sydney changes and grows.



A clean city benefits everyone.
Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

Why this is important

While the transition to a circular economy will greatly reduce waste, some will inevitably remain. It's crucial this waste is managed effectively as its impact can be considerable both within our area and beyond, especially in instances of improper disposal.

Litter, for example, can have a profound effect on our environment, polluting public spaces, parks and bushland, contaminating waterways and harming wildlife.

Three quarters of the marine debris in and around Sydney Harbour is made from plastic and comes from waste discarded in Greater Sydney.¹⁵ Illegal dumping and poorly stored bins can similarly affect safety, blocking roads and footpaths, creating public health risks and posing fire hazards.

Waste in the wrong place makes our area less pleasant for residents and visitors.

Creative, adaptable waste management, plus a shared sense of responsibility among residents and businesses, will counter these challenges and ensure our city remains clean, safe and welcoming for everyone.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're keeping our city clean:

- Maintaining a 24/7 street cleansing schedule and collecting more than 14 tonnes of waste from our street litter bins and public spaces each day.
- Emptying around 107,000 residential bins each week, more than 99% on time.
- Resolving waste storage and collection issues at residential properties with a tailored building-by-building approach.
- Developing precinct-scale solutions for areas experiencing significant waste and safety issues.
- Reducing the impact of major events in our area through dedicated waste-sorting to maximise recycling rates.
- Committing funding for new vehicles and staff to manage increased leaf-drop.
- Raising awareness among residents and local businesses about issues that affect cleanliness, such as illegal dumping or litter from single-use plastic items.

How our cleansing team keeps Sydney clean

Every day:



1,000+ hours
cleaning streets and
collecting waste



1,700+
locations serviced



14+ tonnes of
waste picked up from
public bins and spaces



60+ vehicles
used for **street cleaning**
and **collecting waste**

Every year:



2+ million
attendees at 100+ events
provided with cleansing,
waste or recycling services

Maintaining cleanliness is a continuing priority for us. Our cleansing team, responsible for our streets and public spaces, plays an important part in this.

What we want in the future

Buildings and spaces in our area are equipped with well-designed and integrated waste and recycling infrastructure.

We want to more rapidly respond to areas with recurring waste problems and work with local businesses to help guide the transition to more circular systems, resulting in less waste and litter in our public spaces.

Alongside this, we'll boost engagement with our residential waste and recycling services and motivate our residents to reuse or rehome unwanted items, so fewer materials are thrown out.

We also want to harness innovation and explore new systems to ensure people who visit our city can do so in a more sustainable way.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Investigate systems and innovations to increase recycling and recovery outcomes in our event waste services.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create a dedicated program to address recurring waste issues where standard approaches do not work and bespoke solutions are required.
- Communicate our roles and responsibilities, including what waste services we provide and their service levels, as well as residents' responsibilities around their bins and waste collection.
- Check in regularly with residents and make sure waste charges are equitable.
- Update our waste management development controls and guidelines to respond to changes in technology, data, services, waste streams, and state policy and requirements.
- Talk to small businesses in our area to encourage good waste management practices and increased recycling or diversion of waste from landfill.
- Track changes and growth in the use of our street litter bins and investigate options to reduce waste and increase recycling or diversion of waste from landfill.

Snapshots of success



We're raising awareness about issues that affect the cleanliness of our city.
Photo: Getty Images

Combating single-use plastic

In 2022, the state government banned often-littered single-use plastic items to reduce their harm on the environment.

To amplify the bans, we spread the word among our residents and businesses, also encouraging the use of sustainable, reusable alternatives to replace the banned items.

For businesses, we promoted our toolkit on eliminating single-use items and our guidelines on reducing event waste.

For residents, we created online articles and ads about the banned items and reusable swaps, which attracted lots of attention and generated plenty of robust discussion.

Want to use fewer single-use items and reduce waste? [Here are our tips.](#)

Busting illegal dumping myths

Illegal dumping pollutes waterways, wastes valuable materials and makes our city less enjoyable to spend time in.

Yet we found 30% of Sydneysiders saw it as recycling and good for the environment, while 50% didn't know it was against the law.¹⁶

In 2022, we set out to combat these misbeliefs with billboards, ads and articles, emphasising the illegality of dumping and prompting our residents to fix, sell or donate their unwanted items instead.

This campaign reached more than 12,000 people and we repeated it to similar success several months later.

**Have large, unwanted household items?
[Book a pick-up and we'll collect them.](#)**



Our depot upgrade will help meet our teams' future needs.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Safeguarding our future needs

To continue providing core services such as cleansing and managing waste, we need resilient, futureproofed infrastructure. This is what's driving our upgrade of Bay Street depot.

Located in Ultimo, Bay Street is our oldest depot, operating for more than one century. The site has expanded as our city has grown and now it's time for a major update to support our next 100 years of operations.

As part of this transformation, the depot's heritage buildings will be retained and a new, multistorey structure will be built on the eastern side of the site.

The new design will prioritise flexibility, reflecting how our operations, technology and population may change and allowing modifications to be made with ease. Sustainability and resilience will be at the heart of the design too. The updated depot is intended to feature heat-resistant materials, maximise use of recycled water and support our continuing transition to a 100% electric fleet.

The design will also consider circular principles such as extending the life of materials.

Once complete, this redevelopment will keep our operations running smoothly for decades to come.



Direction 5: Build resilient waste and circular systems

‘Effective collaboration between state and local government is essential to meet shared infrastructure, recycling and circular economy aspirations.’

Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum¹⁷

Our ambition

Flexible, reliable solutions meet the long-term waste and resource management needs of our communities. State and federal policies and regulation allow us to achieve our local ambitions for a more circular system.



Rooftop garden upgrade at The Pyrmont, part of our Smart Green Apartments program. Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Why this is important

Collecting and managing waste and recycling is a core responsibility for councils.

Yet many councils, including ours, face significant challenges in managing this waste and transitioning to a circular economy.

With many material types to manage, we must rely on the private sector to process some or all of our waste and recycling.

In addition, the current framework for planning and regulating waste in NSW is incomplete, unable to drive the growth in recycling processes, technologies and products required to support a circular economy.

Similar gaps in federal frameworks also affect other critical elements required for transitioning to a circular economy, such as product stewardship.

Alongside our own work to maintain flexible, future-ready services and assets, responding to these gaps with a robust joint approach is crucial to achieving smarter waste management and thriving, resilient circular systems.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're helping to build resilient waste and circular systems:

- Hosting the Resilient Sydney program on behalf of all metropolitan Sydney councils and working jointly on resilience and waste challenges.
- Playing an active part in region-wide circular economy projects coordinated by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.
- Participating in the Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and other Greater Sydney councils.
- Contributing to state and federal level working groups seeking to strengthen circular systems.
- Advocating for stronger support from the state and federal governments to better manage waste and achieve circular results.
- Explore opportunities to work with the NSW Government, commercial business organisations and commercial waste collection companies to better coordinate commercial waste collections in the Sydney CBD.



To be recycled, items in the yellow lid bin must pass through many processes and facilities.

What we want in the future

Flexible, reliable, well-placed services and assets that support reduced waste and emissions.

We'll continue to explore innovations to ensure our services are fit for purpose, support our growing population and align with changing regulations.

Plus, we'll continue building a fleet of waste and cleansing vehicles that can access all parts of our city, particularly as walking and cycling areas are expanded and green spaces grow.

We want to work with neighbouring councils to support innovation and call for products that have more recycled content and end-of-life recycling options.

Meanwhile, it is critical that the market, strongly supported by government, build waste processing facilities that are accessible, affordable and contribute to emissions reduction, recycling and the circular economy.

State and federal governments must also incentivise manufacturers and retailers to value materials and design products that support the circular economy and reduce waste to landfill.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Plan for future cleansing and recycling services that respond to how our area will grow and meet the needs of our communities.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Plan for renewal of our long-term processing contracts and review our services to further incentivise reducing waste, increase recycling and manage costs with minimal effect on residents.
- Trial innovative new services and products that will contribute to achieving our waste avoidance and emissions reduction targets.
- Participate in regional, state and federal partnerships and projects that support national waste and circular economy targets.
- Advocate at the state and federal level for adequate waste infrastructure and effective product stewardship regulation.
- Explore opportunities to work with the NSW Government, commercial business organisations and commercial waste collection companies to better coordinate commercial waste collections in the Sydney CBD.

Snapshots of success



The Metropolitan Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste.
Photo: Nick Langley / City of Sydney

Working together on waste solutions for Greater Sydney

We consistently collaborate with neighbouring councils to strengthen waste and circular systems in our region. One way we do this is through our Resilient Sydney work.

Hosted by us on behalf of all metropolitan Sydney councils, the Resilient Sydney program is about preparing our region for big challenges – and ensuring we have effective, future-ready waste systems is a crucial part of this effort.

In mid-2023, Resilient Sydney partnered with the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils to coordinate the Metropolitan Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste.

Held at Sydney Town Hall, the summit brought together nearly 140 Greater Sydney council leaders to discuss shared waste challenges and possible solutions, as well as how the region can move towards a circular economy.

The summit also sparked the creation of the Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum, which we helped set up through Resilient Sydney in late 2023.

At the forum, Greater Sydney councils work closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority on reducing waste and enhancing the circular economy in our region.

Forum priorities include driving important waste and recycling or reuse projects, supporting region-based partnerships and actively sharing information to help meet common goals.



Our innovative trial uses fly larvae to transform food waste.
Photo: Nick Langley / City of Sydney

Our insect-powered food scraps recycling trial

In early 2025, we started using insects to transform our residents' food scraps into animal feed and fertiliser, in a NSW-first trial with Australian innovator Goterra.

Known as insect farming, this method of food recycling is relatively new to Australia. It uses black soldier fly larvae to convert leftover food into nutrient-rich organic products, which are then sold to farms and businesses.

Compared to composting and other traditional food recycling methods, insect farming has a much smaller emissions footprint and requires a lot less space, making it a promising option for our growing urban area.

The trial itself involves residents' food scraps being processed right in the heart of our city, thanks to the compact infrastructure involved.

Insect farming also offsets the demand for resource-intensive agriculture and creates more circular systems. Insect-farmed animal feed, for example, can replace the need to grow new soybean crops.

An exciting step forward, this trial is helping advance our vision for a localised, low-impact residential food scraps recycling solution.

**Want to recycle your food scraps?
Find out how you can get involved.**

Actions and approach

Our actions

Direction 1

Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption

For our organisation:

Review the goods and services we procure to see where we can consider alternative models that avoid buying new.

Identify procurement mechanisms to support the development of circular economy systems.

Develop guidance about how to choose furniture and furnishings that incorporate circular principles for design, use and end-of-life.

Investigate opportunities to further reduce reliance on single-use items.

Identify mechanisms across procurement and design to increase circularity and minimise disposal of textiles.

For our communities:

Create targeted communications campaigns that inspire our residents to reduce their waste.

Increase opportunities for our residents to grow appropriate, nutritious food and to compost at home.

Create convenient opportunities for our residents to locally share and swap household items.

Maintain waste avoidance education and engagement activities for our residents, schools and community groups.

Support capacity-building programs focused on waste reduction and circularity for businesses in our area.

Showcase emerging circular economy innovations in our area and help businesses and organisations connect and collaborate.

Trial and test new ideas that commercialise circular economy innovations.

Collaborate with government and industry to reduce waste and promote circular solutions through our sustainability partnerships.

Direction 2

Boost reuse, repair and recycling

For our organisation:

Measure and report on the recycled content used in major construction materials we buy.

For our communities:

Create pathways to support increased reuse, repair and refurbishment in our area, including grants and a furniture rehoming trial.

Advocate for suppliers of co-living and on-campus accommodation to explore alternative models such as leasing for furniture and home appliances.

Extend residential food scraps collection across our area by 2030, in line with the state government mandate.

Expand opportunities for our residents to recycle tricky items such as unwearable textiles.

Grow tailored programs to increase participation and reduce contamination in recycling services for apartment buildings and social housing in our area.

Explore opportunities to expand Return and Earn collection points in our area.

Direction 3

Foster circular design

For our organisation:

Review our design and construction activities to better incorporate circular design principles.

Create a circular fit-out process for refurbishment of our managed properties.

Audit materials for our major properties and assets projects to increase opportunities to retain, reuse and recycle.

For our communities:

Promote and encourage the use of circular design principles by developers, architects and construction contractors.

Advocate for improved circular design standards in state and national built environment policies and for their use in significant planning projects in our area.

Support the growth of urban agriculture within a sustainable food system and investigate how we might further design and plan for this in our area.

Direction 4

Keep our city clean

For our organisation:

Investigate systems and innovations to increase recycling and recovery outcomes in our event waste services.

For our communities:

Create a dedicated program to address recurring waste issues where standard approaches do not work and bespoke solutions are required.

Communicate our roles and responsibilities, including what waste services we provide and their service levels, as well as residents' responsibilities around their bins and waste collection.

Check in regularly with residents and make sure waste charges are equitable.

Update our waste management development controls and guidelines to respond to changes in technology, data, services, waste streams, and state policy and requirements.

Talk to small businesses in our area to encourage good waste management practices and increased recycling or diversion of waste from landfill.

Track changes and growth in the use of our street litter bins and investigate options to reduce waste and increase recycling or diversion of waste from landfill.

Direction 5

Build resilient waste and circular systems

For our organisation:

Plan for future cleansing and recycling services that respond to how our area will grow and meet the needs of our communities.

For our communities:

Plan for renewal of our long-term processing contracts and review our services to further incentivise reducing waste, increase recycling and manage costs with minimal effect on residents.

Trial innovative new services and products that will contribute to achieving our waste avoidance and emissions reduction targets.

Participate in regional, state and federal partnerships and projects that support national waste and circular economy targets.

Advocate at the state and federal level for adequate waste infrastructure and effective product stewardship regulation.

Explore opportunities to work with the NSW Government, commercial business organisations and commercial waste collection companies to better coordinate commercial waste collections in the Sydney CBD.

How we'll achieve them

The directions and actions presented in this strategy represent the result of work with our employees, communities, industry and other government agencies.

We look forward to realising the vision of the strategy in partnership with them.

Our actions will be incorporated into our relevant operational and business plans.

We'll track and regularly report on our progress through our existing yearly plans and frameworks.

It's also expected that government and industry will initiate their own actions, and we'll continue to push for and help inform new policies and projects that drive forward the circular economy.



A planting day at Sydney City Farm. Photo: Renee Nowytarger / City of Sydney

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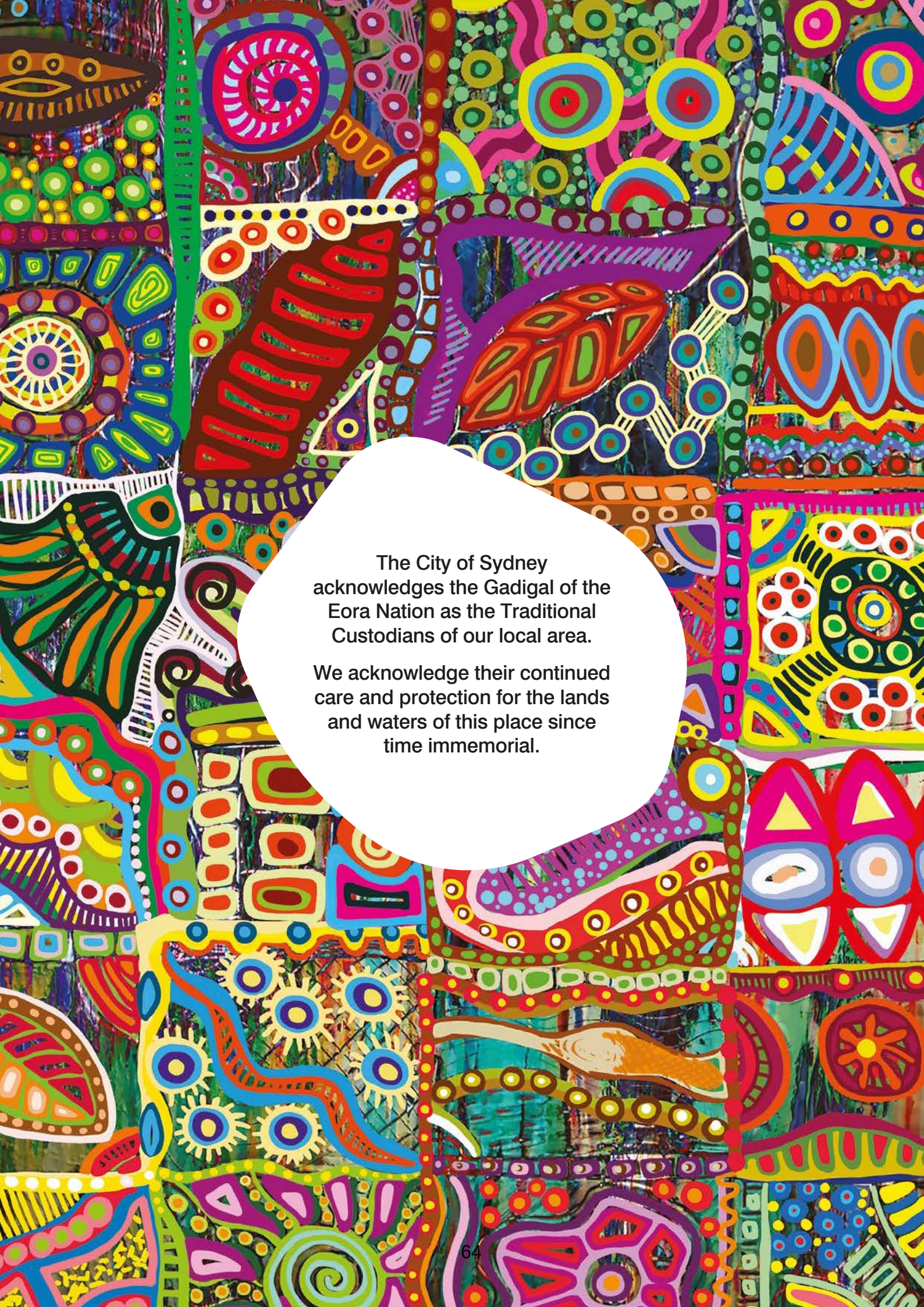
Attachment B

**Waste Reduction and Circular Materials
Strategy 2026-2035 (with tracked changes)**



Draft
September 2025

Waste reduction and circular materials strategy ~~2025~~–2035



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

We acknowledge their continued
care and protection for the lands
and waters of this place since
time immemorial.

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Message from the Lord Mayor



Sydney's future depends on how resources are used and managed today. Within the city and beyond, producing, consuming and disposing unsustainably depletes finite natural materials, generates waste and harms the environment.

Overcoming these challenges demands a transformative new approach, one rooted in the transition to a circular economy, keeping natural materials in use for as long as possible and designing out waste from the start.

The City of Sydney has long shown bold environmental leadership and we know moving to a circular economy is vital to preserve precious natural resources and meet our waste and emissions reduction goals.

Our communities have told us managing waste sustainably is important to them too. They'd like to see increased access to recycling programs, including for food scraps and more information about proper waste disposal and continued advocacy to reduce the impact of plastic in the environment.

Since 2018, we've awarded more than \$400,000 in grants for circular economy and ~~resource recovery~~ projects. Our own innovative circular projects include turning food waste from our buildings into soil conditioner for our parks. We've expanded our services for tricky-to-recycle items and partnered with major events to reduce waste – working with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to phase out plastic glitter and balloons is just one example.

Our efforts have also extended beyond local borders because we know waste systems operate across boundaries. Through region-wide initiatives such as Resilient Sydney, we've been working with other councils to push for better waste processing and the state government is now collaborating more closely with councils to solve the issue.

But the challenges before us require even greater action – and local councils can't shoulder this responsibility alone. The federal and state governments must identify, fund and regulate large-scale solutions. Accelerated waste infrastructure at the state level is essential, as are revised regulatory and economic systems that encourage rather than penalise sustainable choices.

At the City of Sydney, we're more than ready to play our part, and as this strategy shows, our focus for the next decade includes ambitious actions to achieve our vision for a circular economy. We'll tackle textile waste, collect food scraps across our area and test scalable new solutions for processing this valuable resource locally. Our NSW-first trial already uses insects to transform food waste. We'll also use our grant programs to boost reuse and repair, support businesses to go circular and champion the use of sustainable design in local developments and within our own.

Building a circular economy in Sydney will require collective effort from governments, businesses and residents. Join us in shaping a thriving circular future, where sustainable principles fuel innovation, resilience and growth.



Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney

Our vision for circular Sydney

In partnership with our communities, we will strive to make Sydney a city where nothing is wasted.

Waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2025–2035



Introduction

Our new waste reduction and circular materials strategy continues the vision of Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050.

It charts a bold course for Sydney as a thriving circular economy, where sustainable production and consumption ensure finite natural materials are valued, cared for and kept in continuous use, safeguarding them for future generations.

In this envisioned future, these practices will enable a substantial reduction in waste and help combat the harms of climate change.

Our communities have made clear this is important to them. They want us to take decisive action to reduce our city's footprint and transition to a more regenerative, resilient local economy, lead by example and continue to govern in a sustainable way.

Since our last waste strategy, we've made significant progress towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient city.

We've increased recycling services available to our residents, promoted reuse and repair through training and events, deepened community education on avoiding waste and boosted funding for organisations driving circular outcomes.

Innovation in our waste processing contracts has ensured more materials are recycled into valuable new products. We use recycled crushed glass to pave our roads and turn food waste from our buildings into soil conditioner for our parks.

Outside our immediate area, we've also been working closely with other councils and state and federal agencies to advocate for policies that better support the recirculation of materials.

Collectively, these actions have helped reduce waste across our own operations, within our residential communities and in the businesses we partner with.



Our free clothes swaps foster community reuse.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney



Our community engagement stalls offer waste avoidance tips to residents and visitors in our area.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

But while we've made strides, there is still more to do. Right now, waste sent to landfill accounts for 10% of our total area emissions. Meeting our adopted city-wide target of net zero emissions by 2035 – critical to a liveable, equitable city – will require much more waste reduction, supported by better management of materials.

The NSW Government has also announced that without new waste solutions, Greater Sydney's landfill capacity will be exhausted within the next decade.¹

As such, this strategy celebrates our successes and sets our ambition for an even more sustainable, resilient future, in which deeply embedded circular principles drive down waste and minimise our city's environmental impact.

To realise this ambition, the strategy outlines clear pathways across 5 directions, each focused on the elements required to transition to a more circular economy.

These include a collective commitment to careful consumption, widespread reuse, repair and recycling, smarter design and construction, careful waste management and good governance.

Across its 5 directions, the strategy discusses the roles of residents, businesses and visitors, along with our role as the local government.

It also speaks to the responsibilities of other levels of government and industry, and highlights our role within broader frameworks, illustrating how our actions contribute to the regional, national and global waste and materials ecosystem.

The strategy outlines how we'll measure success in our shift to a circular economy, presenting a set of ambitious targets for our organisation, residents and local area.

Beyond setting out our bold approach, this strategy provides a chance for us to share knowledge about the circular economy, making it easier for everyone to join us on the path to a more sustainable future.

The circular economy

At present, our society operates on a linear economic model, where natural materials extracted from the earth are used to make new products and often disposed of in landfill, or worse, released directly into the environment.

This take, make, use, dispose approach is driving unsustainable trends in production and consumption, depleting finite natural resources and creating substantial amounts of waste.

It's clear a transformative new approach is needed and over the last decade the circular economy has emerged as this alternative.

The circular economy is a different way to look at production and consumption, challenging the need for new things made from new materials.

Recycling extends the life of products and materials, but a circular economy goes further. It designs products for repeated cycles of reuse, repair and refurbishment, keeping valuable materials in use for as long as possible before recycling or disposal is needed.

Principles of the circular economy

1. Design out waste and pollution

Many products are currently designed without sustainable end-of-life pathways, sealing their eventual fate as landfill waste.

If a new product does need to be created, it should be designed to enable reuse, repair, refurbishment and, as a last resort, recycling.

2. Keep materials at their highest value

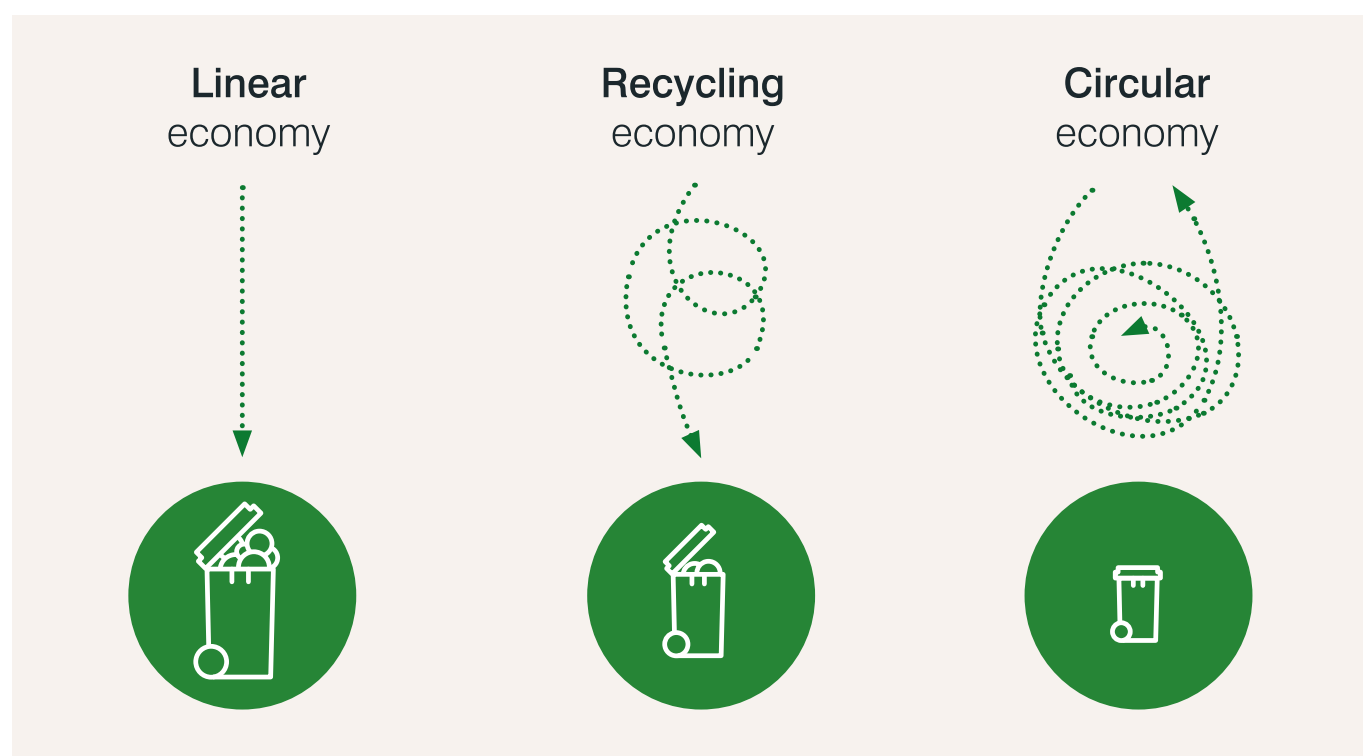
Products and their materials have intrinsic value, which should be maintained through reuse, repair and refurbishment.

Recycling, which requires dismantlement and significantly reduces value, should only take place once other options have been explored.

3. Regenerate nature

A linear economy repeatedly takes raw materials from the earth, depleting and disturbing natural systems.

The focus should move from extraction to regeneration, where nutrient-rich biological material is returned to the earth and nature is allowed to maintain healthy ecosystems.



In the linear economy, many products and materials are only used once then sent to landfill, driving production, consumption and waste. A recycling economy gives items a second life but the circular economy goes further, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible.

How we'll move Sydney to a circular economy

The pathways to achieving our vision for a more circular economy will occur across many different parts of our organisation and city.

We'll focus our efforts through 5 key directions, each with a long-term ambition and an accompanying set of targeted actions.

Each direction represents a distinct approach to the elements needed to create a more circular economy, including a shared commitment to responsible consumption, broad recirculation of materials, better design, careful waste management and good governance.



Key steps

To fulfil the ambitions of our 5 directions and realise our vision for a more circular economy, we'll carry out 39 focused actions for our organisation and communities. Included in these actions are the following key activities:

- ~~Leveraging our buying power~~ to support the shift to a circular economy.
- **Supporting small businesses in our area** to become more circular.
- **Inspiring our residents to reduce their waste** through targeted communications campaigns.
- **Acting on textile waste** by providing new recycling options for unwearable items and creating more opportunities for our residents to understand and practice sustainable shopping and clothes repair.
- **Extending our residential food scraps recycling program** and trialling new innovations for processing this valuable resource locally.
- **Increasing support for reuse and repair projects** through our grants.
- **Championing the use of circular design in new local developments** by creating detailed guidelines to support the building sector.
- ~~Tackling our urban waste management challenges~~ with a dedicated program to address problem areas and with creative methods to curb single-use waste and litter.
- **Continuing to provide flexible, reliable waste and resource recovery services** that meet the long-term needs of our growing and changing communities.
- **Advocating for the accelerated development of adequate waste infrastructure** and for projects that support a circular economy.



We'll work to boost reuse and repair in our area.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

How we'll measure success

To keep us aligned with the long-term ambitions of our 5 directions, we've set a series of targets that will allow us to meaningfully measure our progress.

By June 2030	By June 2035
For our organisation:	
90% diversion from landfill with 50% source separated recycling from our managed properties	90% diversion from landfill with 60% source separated recycling from our managed properties
60% resource recovery of waste from our office strip-outs and fit-outs	70% resource recovery of waste from our office strip-outs and fit-outs
20% reduction in total waste generated from our managed properties (June 2019 baseline)	25% reduction in total waste generated from our managed properties (June 2019 baseline)
90% resource recovery of construction and demolition waste generated and managed by us	95% resource recovery of construction and demolition waste generated and managed by us
60% resource recovery of waste from our parks, streets and public places	70% resource recovery of waste from our parks, streets and public places
For our residents:	
35% source separated recycling of residential waste	40% source separated recycling of residential waste
80% resource recovery of residential waste	90% resource recovery of residential waste
10% reduction in total residential waste generation per capita (June 2023 baseline)	15% reduction in total residential waste generation per capita (June 2023 baseline)
For our local area:	
80% resource recovery of commercial and industrial waste	90% resource recovery of commercial and industrial waste
10% reduction in total commercial and industrial waste generation (June 2019 baseline)	15% reduction in total commercial and industrial waste generation (June 2019 baseline)

Notes:

- All targets are weight based.
- Resource recovery means ~~diversion from landfill~~.

The current waste landscape

Waste and materials in our area today

Our local government area is one of the largest and fastest growing in Australia.

Home to nearly 245,000 residents today and an anticipated 27,000 more by 2035,² our area also hosts around 22,000 businesses and 520,000 jobs.³ In total, the city is used by an estimated 1 million people each day.

This scale of activity generates a broad range of waste, and it's important to understand the main sources, the materials involved and where it goes. This highlights where future efforts to reduce waste and recirculate materials are best focused.

Our organisational waste

We generate waste in our buildings and from our construction work to maintain and upgrade our streets and public spaces.

Since these areas are under our control, we can closely manage the type and volume of waste produced, as well as what happens to it.

At our buildings, waste currently totals around 950 tonnes each year and consists of materials like food, paper and packaging. We divert more than 90% of it from landfill and are now focused on securing higher value for these materials through increased recycling.

Our construction and demolition projects generate about 28,000 tonnes of waste each year, largely made up of materials such as asphalt, concrete, pavers and steel. The recycling rate is very high and we are committed to maintaining this as well as exploring more ways to reduce and reuse these materials.

Residential and public place waste

Waste is also produced by our residents and in the public places we manage.

While we don't have the same direct control over this waste, we are responsible for its collection, and can influence volumes and reduce disposal by educating residents and visitors.

Our residents currently generate around 64,000 tonnes of waste each year. About 65% of this goes into red lid bins and is later processed to extract metals for recycling, while the rest is collected for recycling and recovery through our yellow lid bin, pick-up and drop-off services.

Food is the most prevalent material in the red lid bin, along with recyclable items such as metal, glass and paper. In the yellow lid bin, these standard recyclable items are most common, but they're sometimes accompanied by contaminants like textiles and bagged items.

Meanwhile, electronics, textiles and large cardboard are the most common materials collected in our pick-up and drop-off recycling services, which focus on items that can't be recycled in the yellow lid bin.

Around 50% of our residential waste is diverted from landfill.

In the public places we manage, around 8,000 tonnes of waste is currently produced each year. This includes waste placed in our street litter bins, collected from our streets and parks, and cleaned from our stormwater drains.

The waste in these areas is a mix of organic materials, packaging and illegally dumped bulkier items such as furniture and tyres, and just over 50% of it is diverted from landfill.

Commercial and construction waste

Local businesses and construction projects generate waste as well.

We don't control or collect this waste, but we do recognise its significant impact and strive to influence reduction, reuse and recycling.

Among businesses in our area, we estimate 567,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste is generated each year.

This contains a variety of materials, mainly metals, plastics, food, paper, cardboard and wood, and around 47% is recycled while the remainder goes to landfill.

More than 300,000 tonnes of materials can be reduced, reused or recycled in the future.

Alongside this, we estimate more than 1 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste is produced in our area each year.

Bricks, concrete and soil make up the bulk of this waste, and while over 75% is recycled, this sector also represents significant opportunities for further reduction and reuse.

Waste in the circular economy

Moving to a circular economy is essential, but the process won't be quick or perfect.

During and after the shift, there will still be items without pathways for reuse, repair, refurbishment or recycling.

This means our communities will still rely on many of the waste, recycling and cleansing services we provide.

While we might expect to see a reduction in waste volumes and to adapt our service levels appropriately, we will continue to provide the essential support our communities need.

Control

Our buildings



950t

Our construction and demolition



28,000t

Manage and influence

Our managed parks, streets and public spaces



8,000t

Our residents



64,000t

Influence

Local area commercial and industrial



567,000t

Local area construction and demolition



over 1Mt

One year's worth of waste in our area and where we can control, manage and influence pathways for it. Data current at 2023/24.



We play a crucial role in managing waste. Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Waste responsibilities

In Australia, responsibility for managing and reducing waste is split across federal, state and local governments.

The federal and state governments make waste management laws and set national and state waste reduction targets, which are often similar.

Waste is also regulated by the state government, using mechanisms that include a levy to discourage landfilling.

Local governments are responsible for helping to achieve the national and state targets for the waste streams we collect.

We also have our own waste reduction targets for our organisation and communities.

The ambition of the national and state targets is welcome, but we know the 2025 targets will not be met and it is unlikely that many of the 2030 targets will be achieved on time.

The federal and state governments must do more to identify, fund and regulate large, scalable solutions.

National waste reduction targets⁴

1. Ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres
2. Reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030
3. 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030
4. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry
5. Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025
6. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030

NSW waste reduction targets⁵

1. Reduce total waste generated by 10% per person by 2030
2. Have an 80% average recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030
3. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry
4. Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025
5. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

Any change brings challenges, and as we transition to a circular economy, we'll need to navigate a range of issues and considerations.



Product design and disposal issues

At present, many products are designed with landfill as the only end-of-life option. Plus, even if better options like recycling are considered, this can be hindered by collection challenges and costs to update industry infrastructure, which can't recycle many of the complex products in use today.



Regulatory and policy barriers

Existing federal and state policies fall short in supporting circularity, leaving the reuse, repair and recycling industries underfunded compared to those that extract raw materials from the earth. One result is that recycling can often cost more than landfill disposal, even with state landfill levies in place.



The appeal of the new and convenient

Since current systems don't adequately support reuse, repair and recycling, it's often cheaper and easier for consumers to buy new products instead. Reuse and repair practices aren't yet normalised either, so new products can be more appealing even if they're not the sustainable choice.



The realities of city living

About 80% of our residents live in apartments,⁶ creating competing demands for space. This can make it harder to reuse, repair and recycle. Plus, in dense urban areas like ours, there's less space to grow food and to compost.



A growing and changing city

Our population is growing and changing, which may increase resource use and waste. It will also create more competition for space on the street. This increased competition, coupled with our city-wide push to expand walking and cycling areas for better accessibility and lower emissions, will present new complexities for collecting and managing waste.

Opportunities

Although there will be challenges, transitioning to a circular economy will bring profound benefits to our area – environmental, social and economic.



Better environmental outcomes

Widespread circular practices will benefit our local environment and reduce our global impact, resulting in fewer emissions, less pollution, and protection of natural resources and biodiversity.



Cost and resource savings

When local businesses and organisations go circular, they'll find smart ways to save money and cut costs. This could be by using repurposed materials, sharing equipment or making products that last longer and are easier to fix.



New local jobs and markets

With some support, businesses operating on circular principles will be able to buy and sell at scale. This will create new jobs and markets, boosting our economy and building community wealth.



Greater innovation

The shift to a circular economy will drive radical innovation as systems are rethought, redesigned and rebuilt in a circular way. It will create new design methods, new processes and new ways for organisations to collaborate.



More connected communities

In many ways, the transition to a circular economy will happen at a person-to-person level, bringing together individuals to preserve resources and reduce waste. This will create more engaged and connected communities.



Sustainable local food systems

Transitioning to a circular economy will support the development of sustainable local food systems, where produce is grown locally with minimal impact and any waste is used to nourish the earth.



Increased local resilience

Circular businesses will rely less on international suppliers for materials and resources, making them less vulnerable to global trade issues, pandemics and other large-scale shocks. Localised production hubs and food systems will make our communities more resilient to shocks and challenges too.



Direction 1: Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption

'We envision the city as a leader in reversing climate change and restoring the natural environment by giving back more than it takes.'

Sydney 2050 Citizens' Jury⁷

Our ambition

Alongside us, our communities consume responsibly, reduce waste and embrace circular practices.



Responsible consumption in action.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Why this is important

The current economic model of take, make, use, dispose has fostered the misconception that raw natural materials are in endless supply.

As a result, products are often made from new rather than recycled materials and designed without sustainable end-of-life pathways, with few regulatory or financial barriers to deter this.

Similarly, consumers are rarely prompted to reflect on the impact of their purchases or to opt for more sustainable alternatives.

This in turn creates considerable waste and other environmental impacts. Nearly 30% of all local consumption-related emissions are linked to the purchase of goods and services.

To keep these impacts from escalating – and ideally, to reduce them – there must be a stronger shared awareness of making and choosing more sustainable products, plus the right support to do it as our city grows. Also essential is an understanding that these alternatives can prevent waste and other environmental harms.

This must all be rooted in circular economy thinking, with broad recognition that materials are finite, valuable and require wise use to support current and future needs.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're championing waste avoidance and careful consumption in our area:

- Turning food waste from our offices into fertiliser for our parks.
- Replacing paper towels with hand dryers in our bathrooms and single-use serveware with reusables at many events.
- Equipping our residents with waste avoidance knowledge through community information stalls, webinars, communications campaigns, a tailored online Q&A service and a search tool.
- Upskilling our residents about localised, low-waste food production at Sydney City Farm, our urban agriculture site.
- Working with industry to increase circularity and reduce waste in commercial offices, hotels, entertainment venues and more.
- Awarding grants for circular economy and waste avoidance ideas, such as an accelerator program for circular economy startups.

What we want in the future

Reduced consumption of products made from new materials, without loss of consumer convenience or economic growth.

We want to use our procurement power to drive change in supply chains and service delivery models, so products and services used in our area are created and provided in a more sustainable, circular way.

Empowering local businesses, big and small, is also crucial for bold action on circularity and avoiding waste. Alongside this, we want to support broad innovation and collaboration on circular projects, fostering better practices and strengthening social cohesion.

Similarly, more education and support will deepen our communities' understanding of responsible consumption, waste avoidance and other circular practices, and make it easy for anyone to participate.

We also want to offer opportunities for our residents to understand and benefit from natural and regenerative systems, as these aid greatly in avoiding waste.

How we'll get there

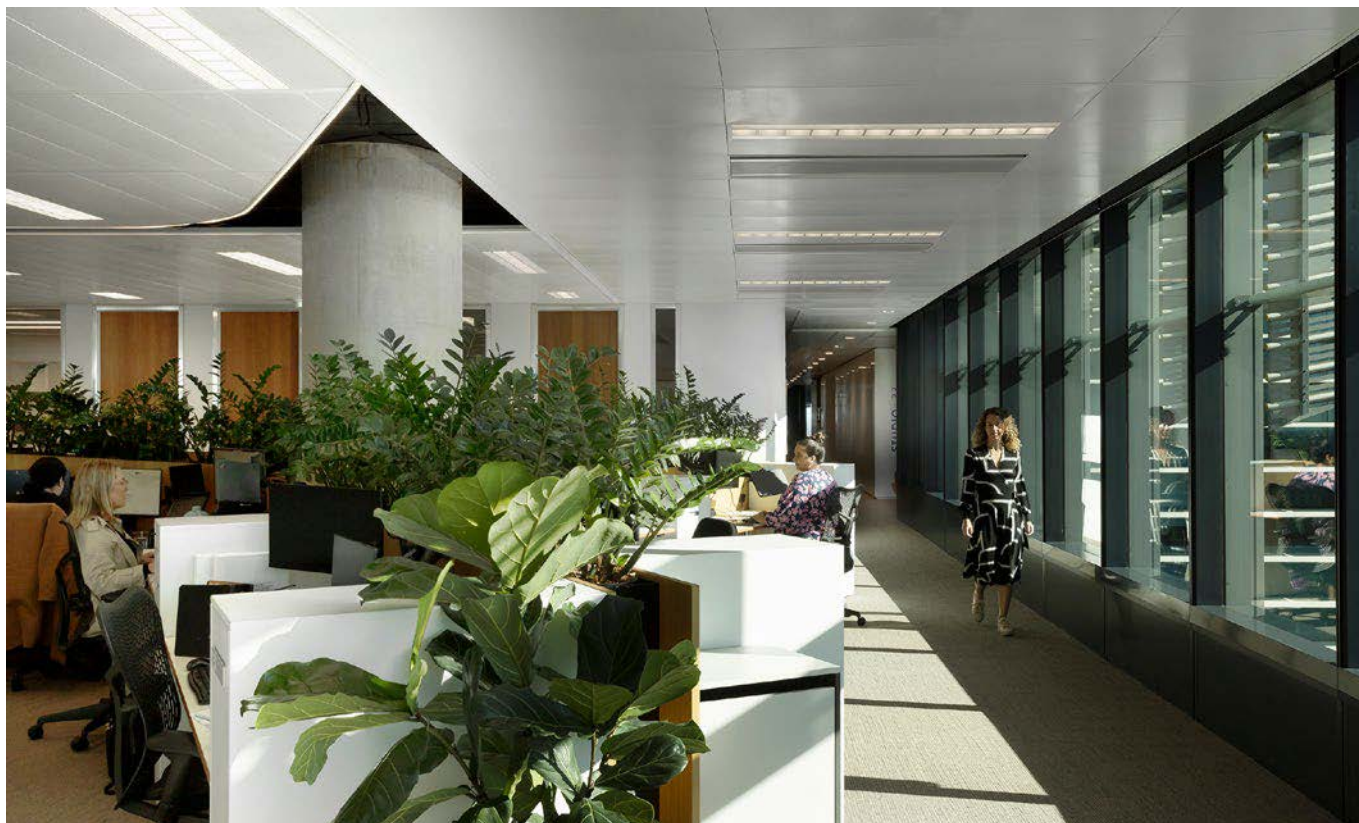
Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Review the goods and services we procure to see where we can consider alternative models that avoid buying new.
- Identify procurement mechanisms to support the development of circular economy systems.
- Develop guidance about how to choose furniture and furnishings that incorporate circular principles for design, use and end-of-life.
- Investigate opportunities to further reduce reliance on single-use items.
- Identify mechanisms across procurement and design to increase circularity and minimise disposal of textiles.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create targeted communications campaigns that inspire our residents to reduce their waste.
- Increase opportunities for our residents to grow appropriate, nutritious food and to compost at home.
- Create convenient opportunities for our residents to locally share and swap household items.
- Maintain waste avoidance education and engagement activities for our residents, schools and community groups.
- Support capacity-building programs focused on waste reduction and circularity for businesses in our area.
- Showcase emerging circular economy innovations in our area and help businesses and organisations connect and collaborate.
- Trial and test new ideas that commercialise circular economy innovations.
- Collaborate with government and industry to reduce waste and promote circular solutions through our sustainability partnerships.

Snapshots of success



Sustainable office fit-outs are an impactful way to reduce waste.
Photo: Stephanie Zingsheim / City of Sydney

Turning the tables on office fit-out waste

Australia generates at least 30,000 tonnes of commercial furniture waste each year – and 95% of it ends up in landfill.⁸

This trend is fuelled by a few factors, including inflexible design and an overuse of parts that are hard to repair, reuse or recycle.

Recognising this problem in our own city, the Better Buildings Partnership stepped up.

Guided by us, the partnership includes leading property owners and influencers, and since 2011, we've worked together to make Sydney's buildings more sustainable.

In 2023, the partnership asked industry stakeholders about the challenges of office fit-out waste, and based on these findings, teamed up with the Green Building Council of Australia to create a new toolkit for circular office fit-outs.

Aimed at office fit-out project teams, this toolkit presents circular, sustainable design strategies to prevent waste at every phase of the process, from pre-design and concept design to the detailed plans.

Inspiring and useful, the toolkit is helping pave the way for more circular fit-outs in our area.

Working on an office fit-out?
Make it low-waste with the circular toolkit.



Our food scraps become fertiliser for our parks.
Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney



Revolve ReCYCLING save bikes from landfill.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

From food waste to fertiliser

A wide-scale food scraps recycling program is helping us manage our waste.

Trialing and scaling for success

In 2018, 2 of our properties began a food scraps recycling trial, which helped cut their monthly landfill waste by 30%.

Encouraged by these results, we've now introduced food scraps recycling at 12 properties. The scraps are taken to a processing facility south of Sydney and given a second life as compost, soil or mulch.

Exploring a localised approach

Building on this success, we began to explore on-site food scraps recycling, and in 2021 we bought food dehydrators to turn leftovers from 3 of our properties into soil conditioner for our parks.

The units processed 8,250kg in their first full year of operation, and this localised, circular project has also helped cut our transport emissions, since we now need to send fewer scraps away for recycling.

Supporting green business transformation

Our grants help local small businesses and startups explore circular practices and operate more sustainably.

Tech startup Greener has developed a digital tool that helps small businesses make green choices. The tool is now used by many businesses in our area, from restaurants and bars to homeware stores.

Not-for-profit Revolve ReCYCLING ran a pilot to collect and redeploy unwanted bikes in our area. The pilot was a success and the Revolve team now collects up to 500 bikes each month to refurbish, rehome or recycle.

Startup space Fishburners unveiled Australia's first accelerator program for early-stage circular economy businesses. Working on exciting ideas for textiles, technology and more, the 12 participating startups received mentoring, education and chances to connect with industry experts and investors.

Got a bright idea about how to fuel the circular economy? [Apply for a grant.](#)



Hands-on learning at Sydney City Farm.
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Sydney City Farm: cultivating sustainable food systems

Sydney City Farm is a place for our communities to connect with nature and learn more about localised, low-waste food production.

Located in St Peters, this 5,000 square metre urban farm hosts events throughout the year, from workshops, talks and webinars to school group sessions and family-friendly open days.

All activities speak to the unique needs of our communities, with topics like urban composting and worm farming, creating edible gardens in rental homes and growing bush food in cities.

Regular guided farm walks also introduce concepts such as seasonal planting, which is important for growing delicious produce in a low-impact way.

The farm runs a large volunteer program too, allowing interested locals to gain planting, weeding and harvesting experience.

Each year, volunteers help grow around 400kg of seasonal, organic fruit and vegetables, all donated to local charities.

A vibrant, sustainable alternative to large-scale food systems, Sydney City Farm gives our communities the knowledge and skills to make more sustainable choices themselves.

**Want to develop your gardening skills
and learn how to grow food?
Get involved at Sydney City Farm.**



Direction 2: Boost reuse, repair and recycling

‘The most sustainable product is
one that already exists.’

Adam Siegel⁹

Our ambition

Our communities have convenient access to reuse, repair and refurbishment services at no greater cost than buying new. Where these options are not yet available, recycling is prioritised over disposal to landfill.



Free clothes repair workshop for our residents.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Why this is important

Creating new products demands extracting finite materials from the earth – an inherently unsustainable process, especially at current rates of production and consumption.

Producing goods also creates environmental harm, often requiring large amounts of water, chemicals and energy.

The most effective way to reverse this is to recirculate existing materials and products for as long as possible, reducing the need for new, but at present, the systems to support this aren't mature enough.

As a result, reuse and repair are often less accessible and more costly than buying new, while recycling practices are still developing.

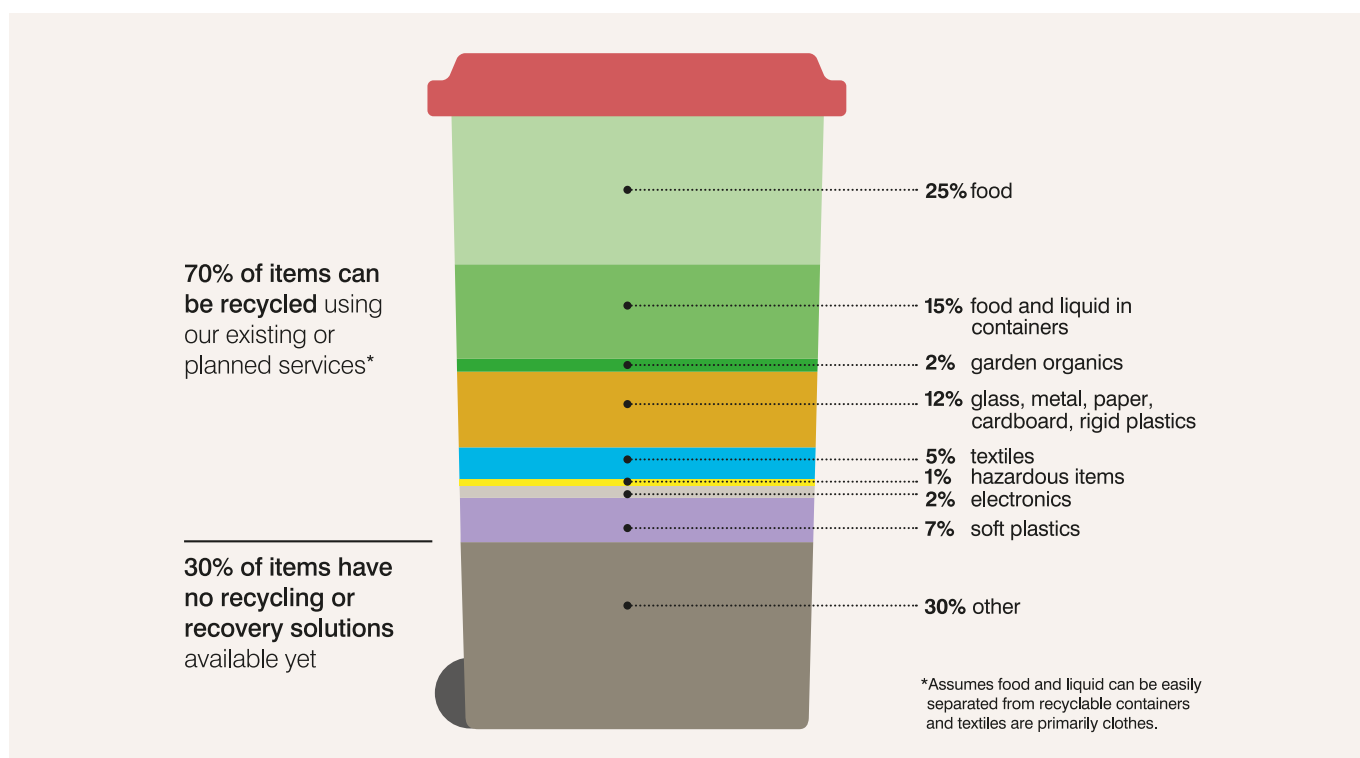
We can see this in our own area, where audits showed more than 25% of the furniture left out for household bulky waste pick-up is suitable for reuse. We also know our residents' red lid bins frequently contain recyclable items like glass, cardboard and electronics.

All this underscores the urgent need for more entrenched, accessible reuse, repair and recycling systems, bolstered by greater community awareness and participation.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're fostering reuse, repair and recycling in our area:

- Reusing furniture and office equipment and recycling our electronics, employee uniforms and more.
- Using recycled materials in building major roads, cycleways and footpaths.
- Hosting reuse and repair events for our residents, including clothes swaps, toy swaps and mending workshops.
- Providing residents with pick-up and drop-off options to recycle tricky items like electronics, paint and polystyrene.
- Auditing residential bin contents to identify where extra recycling options could be provided.
- Awarding grants to organisations working on reuse, repair and recycling, including a furniture rehoming charity, a furniture repair workshop and a design practice developing recycled yarn.



Many items placed in red lid bins could be recycled instead. Percentages for item groups add to 99%, reflecting minor rounding adjustments. Data based on bin audits completed in 2023.

What we want in the future

Broad, convenient and cost-effective access to reuse, repair and refurbishment services, helping drive demand, boost participation and grow repair and refurbishment skills across our area.

We also want to make it easier for our residents to effectively participate in our recycling services. These include our kerbside yellow lid bin and food scraps recycling services, plus our Return and Earn stations and pick-up and drop-off options for tricky-to-recycle items.

Alongside this, we'll aim to keep adapting and evolving our services to meet the changing needs of our residents and the items they use, which may eventually require disposal.

We're already set to expand our recycling services for unwearable textiles and we'll seek to reintroduce soft plastics recycling as soon as the necessary industry infrastructure is in place.

To become circular, our society needs to both keep recycling and use more recycled products – so we also want to help create a thriving market for recycled materials.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Measure and report on the recycled content used in major construction materials we buy.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create pathways to support increased reuse, repair and refurbishment in our area, including grants and a furniture rehoming trial.
- Advocate for suppliers of co-living and on-campus accommodation to explore alternative models such as leasing for furniture and home appliances.
- Extend residential food scraps collection across our area by 2030, in line with the state government mandate.
- Expand opportunities for our residents to recycle tricky items such as unwearable textiles.
- Grow tailored programs to increase participation and reduce contamination in recycling services for apartment buildings and social housing in our area.
- Explore opportunities to expand Return and Earn collection points in our area.

Snapshots of success



Learning more about reuse and repair will help reduce waste to landfill.
Photo: Alec Smart / The Bower

Inspiring new skills and habits

The Bower is an award-winning Sydney charity that champions reuse and repair through workshops, courses, events and more.

We've proudly supported The Bower since 2014, and in 2023 and 2024, we gave a grant to help its team present Australia's first Festival of Repair.

Held in Redfern, this trailblazing 2-week festival was designed to build new skills and inspire new habits, so more items are repaired and reused rather than sent to landfill.

At hands-on workshops and demonstrations led by skilled local craftspeople, festival attendees learnt how to repair their clothes, electronics, furniture, bikes and musical instruments.

Hundreds of attendees traded preloved fashion at a clothes swap and others enjoyed a weekend market day, discovering recycled and upcycled treasures and meeting our waste avoidance educators.

Sustainable design methods were showcased at the festival too, with expert talks about tiny homes and how to use reclaimed and recycled materials in new building projects.

The festival welcomed around 1,500 people and received great community feedback.

Tricky recycling made simple

Products and packaging have become far more complex in recent decades, but the mainstream recycling industry hasn't caught up yet.

This has made for lots of tricky items our residents can't recycle in the yellow lid bin – and to stop them from going to landfill, we've had to think outside the box.

Charting new paths for tricky items

We began providing our residents with ways to recycle tricky items more than 10 years ago.

Quarterly drive-through drop-offs for electronics, yearly drop-offs for chemicals and 10 walk-up recycling stations for batteries, mobile phones and light bulbs helped our residents live more sustainably.

Then, as products and packaging kept evolving, our residents told us they'd like more ways to recycle more items – so we got to work.

New services to meet new needs

In 2020, we revamped and relaunched our quarterly drop-off event as Recycle It Saturday. We also developed a doorstep pick-up service for residents to recycle tricky items from home.

In 2022, we updated our recycling stations at 16 community locations and rounded out the year by launching a walkable weekly drop-off centre at our Bay Street depot in Ultimo.

We worked hard to ensure these expanded services could accept a wide range of items, and now our residents can recycle polystyrene, clothes, metals, x-rays, electronics, coffee pods, blister packs and more.

With great feedback and uptake, these services have already helped residents save over 345 tonnes of items from landfill.

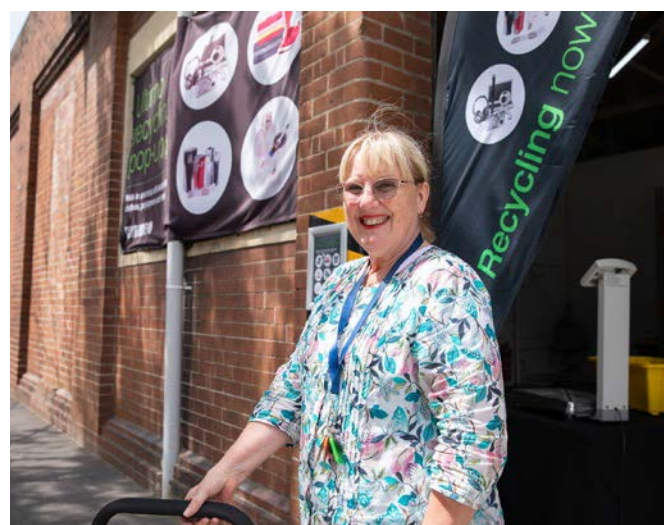
Have old electronics, clothes, paint or polystyrene? Try our recycling services for tricky items.



Recycle It Saturday.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney



Doorstep recycling service.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



Ultimo recycling pop-up.
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



Our uniform recycling program has had a great response.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Fashioning a sustainable future

Clothing in Australia has a huge carbon footprint, largely due to the unsustainable ways clothes are made, used and disposed of.

It will take everyone to reverse this trend, and as a local council we can both empower our residents and lead by example with sustainable choices.

Helping our residents reuse and repair

From 2021 to 2024, we held a series of clothing reuse and repair events for our residents.

Nearly 2,000 people attended our 10 clothes swaps and 34 repair and upcycling workshops, swapping over 1.5 tonnes of items and learning easy ways to extend the life of their clothes.

Encouraged by the response, we plan to continue these events and have enjoyed sharing lessons with recent community-led swaps, helping contribute to their success too.

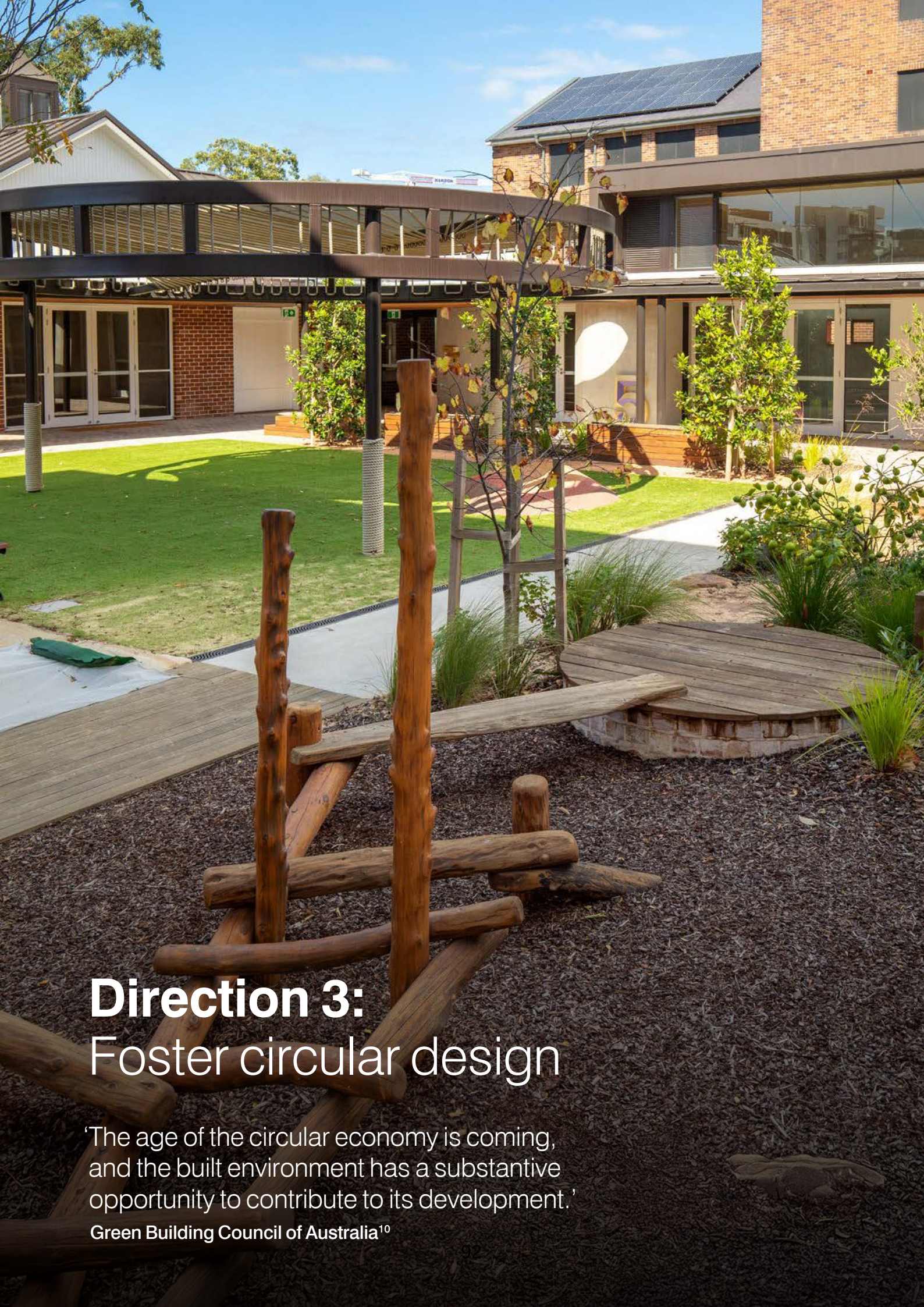
Recycling uniforms

In 2023 and 2024, we trialled a uniform recycling program with our cleansing and parks teams.

We collected and sent the teams' old uniforms to an Australian textile recovery company, who sorted the uniforms for reuse or recycling.

Good condition, non-branded garments were donated to charity, while items in a poor state or with logos were recycled into infill fibre for pet bedding, furniture and insulation.

We collected more than 500kg of uniforms during the trial and have now made it a permanent program, with plans to deepen its impact by expanding to more teams in our organisation.



Direction 3: Foster circular design

'The age of the circular economy is coming, and the built environment has a substantive opportunity to contribute to its development.'

Green Building Council of Australia¹⁰

Our ambition

New buildings and spaces are designed with circular principles, so they use fewer new materials, last longer and allow for easy repurposing at end-of-life.



This Zetland childcare centre repurposes old hospital buildings.
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Why this is important

In Australia, construction generates the same volume of emissions as the transport industry.¹¹ It also produces the most waste.¹²

But while the transport industry is accelerating towards electrification, the construction sector has been slower to adopt more sustainable practices.

Coupled with a predicted increase in demand for development, this means the impact of the construction industry is only set to grow.

We'll see this demand in our own area, where projected population growth will require an increase in housing, community facilities and open spaces to ensure the city remains a liveable and enjoyable place.

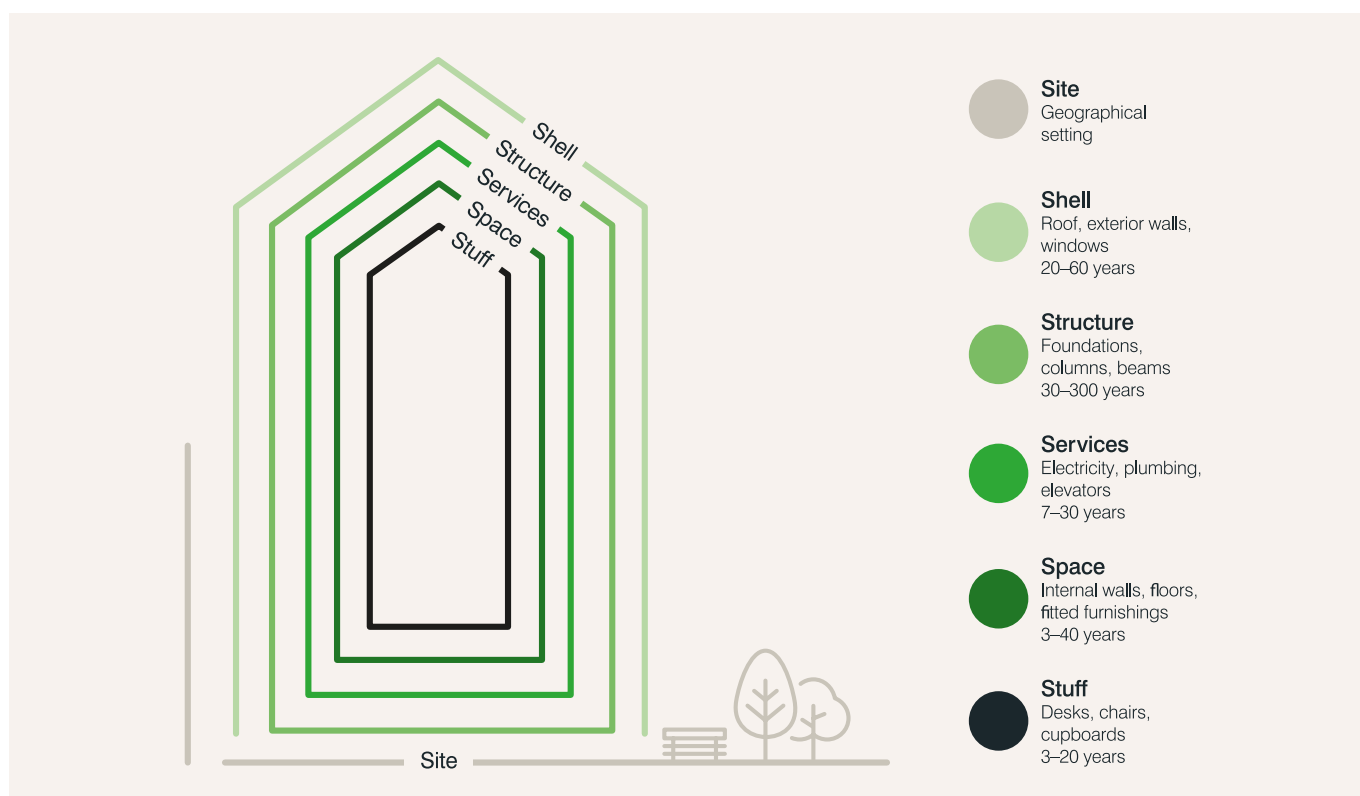
In the next 5 years alone, we'll seek to support nearly 19,000 new homes being built in our area, as tasked by the state government.¹³

With intensive new construction inevitable, a bold, broad embrace of circular design is more important than ever, so the negative effects of this construction can be minimised as much as possible.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're fostering circular design in our area:

- Developing guidelines to ensure our community buildings are designed to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Requiring circular design considerations in our major new depot redevelopment.
- Creating circular design guidelines for architects, developers and contractors.
- Updating our local planning rules so underused city basements can be more easily repurposed for urban agriculture.
- Working with industry to champion circular office fit-outs in our area.
- Awarding grants for circular design related ideas, such as using smart design technology to reduce building material waste and creating circular fit-out guidelines for retail and hospitality venues.



We want to see more buildings designed as sets of largely independent layers based on lifespan, enabling disassembly not demolition and allowing materials to be preserved for reuse. Diagram adapted from Arup.

What we want in the future

A consistent approach to circular design at the federal, state and local levels, with all parties moving towards the same goals.

We want to champion the circular design transition in our own projects and guide the move for other developments, ensuring that as our population grows, the focus is on designing and building better, rather than on simply creating more.

This means that when we interact with those looking to build in our area, we'll encourage circular design strategies such as using repurposed, low-carbon materials or treating each building component as a separate layer to allow for flexible use and easier disassembly, preserving materials and reducing the need for demolition.

We also want to promote the importance of good design in enabling natural regeneration and sustainable food systems – essential elements for a circular economy. Our goal is to use our planning guidance and policies to create an environment where design that prioritises nature can succeed.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Review our design and construction activities to better incorporate circular design principles.
- Create a circular fit-out process for refurbishment of our managed properties.
- Audit materials for our major properties and assets projects to increase opportunities to retain, reuse and recycle.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Promote and encourage the use of circular design principles by developers, architects and construction contractors.
- Advocate for improved circular design standards in state and national built environment policies and for their use in significant planning projects in our area.
- Support the growth of urban agriculture within a sustainable food system and investigate how we might further design and plan for this in our area.

Snapshots of success



Our new guidelines will encourage circular design in our area.
Photo: Jamie Williams / City of Sydney

Stimulating circular design in local developments

Regularly interacting with those looking to design and build in our area makes us well-positioned to share knowledge and encourage circular design.

To achieve this, we're creating circular design guidelines for architects, designers, developers and building contractors.

Inspiring and useful, the guidelines will lay out the benefits of circular design, offer practical application strategies and show how it can benefit all parts of a project.

The guidelines will also introduce the build in layers concept, which enables deconstruction instead of demolition and allows materials to be preserved and reused.

Drawing on insights from design consultants, property developers and building companies, the guidelines will be tailored for local relevance and useful for new and existing developments of all types and sizes.

Circular design at work in our area

20 Martin Place

An unremarkable 1970s tower was transformed into a high-performing, 6-Green Star office building.

The building was stripped back to its steel frame, with tonnes of hazardous asbestos removed in the process.

A highly durable, environmentally responsive new façade was built on the original frame, using sustainable materials such as lower-carbon concrete. The design also incorporated flexible layouts and floorplans.

The project ultimately retained 5,500 tonnes of structural steel, achieved a 40% embodied carbon saving and set a world-class standard for energy efficiency in commercial buildings.

Camperdown Childcare

Circular design helped turn an old warehouse into a state-of-the-art childcare centre.

Reusable original elements, such as the roof trusses, were retained to minimise new construction and acknowledge site history.

New elements were designed as prefabricated modules, allowing for flexibility and reuse plus a more efficient build.

Low-impact materials helped reduce emissions, and a large roof cut-out created an outdoor play space in a great example of creative reuse.

With on-site construction and fit-out completed in just 12 weeks, an airy, adaptable centre ideal for early learning and development came to life.



Upgrades begin at 20 Martin Place. Photo: Built



20 Martin Place stripped back to its steel frame. Photo: Built



20 Martin Place transformed through circular design. Photo: Built



Direction 4: Keep our city clean

‘Our streets and public spaces are
the face we show the world.’

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050¹⁴

Our ambition

Streets are clean and free of clutter and our environment is protected from the impacts of litter and harmful materials. We adapt our services as Sydney changes and grows.



A clean city benefits everyone.
Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

Why this is important

While the transition to a circular economy will greatly reduce waste, some will inevitably remain. It's crucial this waste is managed effectively as its impact can be considerable both within our area and beyond, especially in instances of improper disposal.

Litter, for example, can have a profound effect on our environment, polluting public spaces, parks and bushland, contaminating waterways and harming wildlife.

Three quarters of the marine debris in and around Sydney Harbour is made from plastic and comes from waste discarded in Greater Sydney.¹⁵ Illegal dumping and poorly stored bins can similarly affect safety, blocking roads and footpaths, creating public health risks and posing fire hazards.

Waste in the wrong place makes our area less pleasant for residents and visitors.

Creative, adaptable waste management, plus a shared sense of responsibility among residents and businesses, will counter these challenges and ensure our city remains clean, safe and welcoming for everyone.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're keeping our city clean:

- Maintaining a 24/7 street cleansing schedule and collecting more than 14 tonnes of waste from our street litter bins and public spaces each day.
- Emptying around 107,000 residential bins each week, more than 99% on time.
- Resolving waste storage and collection issues at residential properties with a tailored building-by-building approach.
- Developing precinct-scale solutions for areas experiencing significant waste and safety issues.
- Reducing the impact of major events in our area through dedicated waste-sorting to maximise recycling rates.
- Committing funding for new vehicles and staff to manage increased leaf-drop.
- Raising awareness among residents and local businesses about issues that affect cleanliness, such as illegal dumping or litter from single-use plastic items.

How our cleansing team keeps Sydney clean

Every day:



1,000+ hours
cleaning streets and
collecting waste



1,700+
locations serviced



14+ tonnes of
waste picked up from
public bins and spaces



60+ vehicles
used for **street cleaning**
and **collecting waste**

Every year:



2+ million
attendees at 100+ events
provided with cleansing,
waste or recycling services

Maintaining cleanliness is a continuing priority for us. Our cleansing team, responsible for our streets and public spaces, plays an important part in this.

What we want in the future

Buildings and spaces in our area are equipped with well-designed and integrated waste and recycling infrastructure.

We want to more rapidly respond to areas with recurring waste problems and work with local businesses to help guide the transition to more circular systems, resulting in less waste and litter in our public spaces.

Alongside this, we'll boost engagement with our residential waste and recycling services and motivate our residents to reuse or rehome unwanted items, so fewer materials are thrown out.

We also want to harness innovation and explore new systems to ensure people who visit our city can do so in a more sustainable way.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Investigate systems and innovations to increase recycling and recovery outcomes in our event waste services.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Create a dedicated program to address recurring waste issues where standard approaches do not work and bespoke solutions are required.
- Communicate our roles and responsibilities, including what waste services we provide and their service levels, as well as residents' responsibilities around their bins and waste collection.
- Check in regularly with residents and make sure waste charges are equitable.
- Update our waste management development controls and guidelines to respond to changes in technology, data, services, waste streams, and state policy and requirements.
- Talk to small businesses in our area to encourage good waste management practices and increased resource recovery.
- Track changes and growth in the use of our street litter bins and investigate options to reduce waste and increase resource recovery.

Snapshots of success



We're raising awareness about issues that affect the cleanliness of our city.
Photo: Getty Images

Combating single-use plastic

In 2022, the state government banned often-littered single-use plastic items to reduce their harm on the environment.

To amplify the bans, we spread the word among our residents and businesses, also encouraging the use of sustainable, reusable alternatives to replace the banned items.

For businesses, we promoted our toolkit on eliminating single-use items and our guidelines on reducing event waste.

For residents, we created online articles and ads about the banned items and reusable swaps, which attracted lots of attention and generated plenty of robust discussion.

Want to use fewer single-use items and reduce waste? [Here are our tips.](#)

Busting illegal dumping myths

Illegal dumping pollutes waterways, wastes valuable materials and makes our city less enjoyable to spend time in.

Yet we found 30% of Sydneysiders saw it as recycling and good for the environment, while 50% didn't know it was against the law.¹⁶

In 2022, we set out to combat these misbeliefs with billboards, ads and articles, emphasising the illegality of dumping and prompting our residents to fix, sell or donate their unwanted items instead.

This campaign reached more than 12,000 people and we repeated it to similar success several months later.

**Have large, unwanted household items?
[Book a pick-up and we'll collect them.](#)**



Our depot upgrade will help meet our teams' future needs.
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

Safeguarding our future needs

To continue providing core services such as cleansing and managing waste, we need resilient, futureproofed infrastructure. This is what's driving our upgrade of Bay Street depot.

Located in Ultimo, Bay Street is our oldest depot, operating for more than one century. The site has expanded as our city has grown and now it's time for a major update to support our next 100 years of operations.

As part of this transformation, the depot's heritage buildings will be retained and a new, multistorey structure will be built on the eastern side of the site.

The new design will prioritise flexibility, reflecting how our operations, technology and population may change and allowing modifications to be made with ease. Sustainability and resilience will be at the heart of the design too. The updated depot is intended to feature heat-resistant materials, maximise use of recycled water and support our continuing transition to a 100% electric fleet.

The design will also consider circular principles such as extending the life of materials.

Once complete, this redevelopment will keep our operations running smoothly for decades to come.



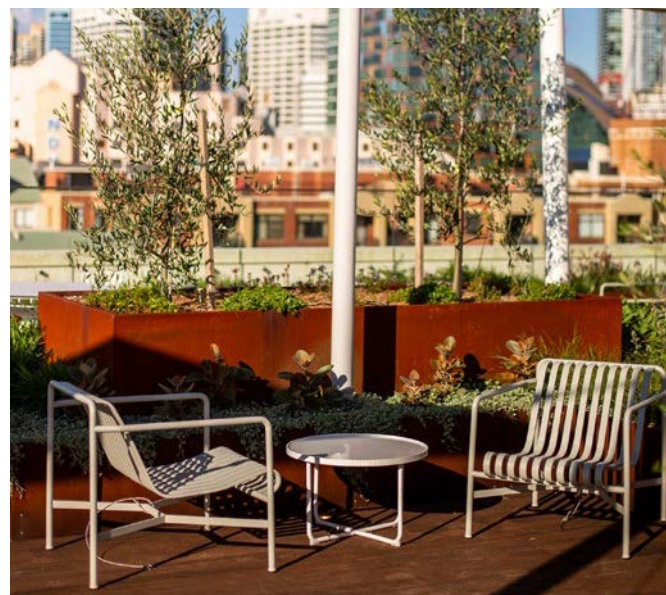
Direction 5: Build resilient waste and circular systems

‘Effective collaboration between state and local government is essential to meet shared infrastructure, recycling and circular economy aspirations.’

Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum¹⁷

Our ambition

Flexible, reliable solutions meet the long-term waste and resource recovery needs of our communities. State and federal policies and regulation allow us to achieve our local ambitions for a more circular system.



Rooftop garden upgrade at The Pyrmont, part of our Smart Green Apartments program. Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Why this is important

Collecting and managing waste and recycling is a core responsibility for councils.

Yet many councils, including ours, face significant challenges in managing this waste and transitioning to a circular economy.

With many material types to manage, we must rely on the private sector to process some or all of our waste and recycling.

In addition, the current framework for planning and regulating waste in NSW is incomplete, unable to drive the growth in resource recovery processes, technologies and products required to support a circular economy.

Similar gaps in federal frameworks also affect other critical elements required for transitioning to a circular economy, such as product stewardship.

Alongside our own work to maintain flexible, future-ready services and assets, responding to these gaps with a robust joint approach is crucial to achieving smarter waste management and thriving, resilient circular systems.

What we're doing already

There are many ways we're helping to build resilient waste and circular systems:

- Hosting the Resilient Sydney program on behalf of all metropolitan Sydney councils and working jointly on resilience and waste challenges.
- Playing an active part in region-wide circular economy projects coordinated by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.
- Participating in the Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and other Greater Sydney councils.
- Contributing to state and federal level working groups seeking to strengthen circular systems.
- Advocating for stronger support from the state and federal governments to better manage waste and achieve circular results.



To be recycled, items in the yellow lid bin must pass through many processes and facilities.

What we want in the future

Flexible, reliable, well-placed services and assets that support reduced waste and emissions.

We'll continue to explore innovations to ensure our services are fit for purpose, support our growing population and align with changing regulations.

Plus, we'll continue building a fleet of waste and cleansing vehicles that can access all parts of our city, particularly as walking and cycling areas are expanded and green spaces grow.

We want to work with neighbouring councils to support innovation and call for products that have more recycled content and end-of-life recycling options.

Meanwhile, it is critical that the market, strongly supported by government, build waste processing facilities that are accessible, affordable and contribute to emissions reduction, **resource recovery** and the circular economy.

State and federal governments must also incentivise manufacturers and retailers to value materials and design products that support the circular economy and reduce waste to landfill.

How we'll get there

Actions we'll take for our organisation:

- Plan for future cleansing and **resource recovery** services that respond to how our area will grow and meet the needs of our communities.

Actions we'll take for our communities:

- Plan for renewal of our long-term processing contracts and review our services to further incentivise reducing waste, increase **resource recovery** and manage costs with minimal effect on residents.
- Trial innovative new services and products that will contribute to achieving our waste avoidance and emissions reduction targets.
- Participate in regional, state and federal partnerships and projects that support national waste and circular economy targets.
- Advocate at the state and federal level for adequate waste infrastructure and effective product stewardship regulation.
- Explore opportunities to work with the NSW Government, commercial business organisations and commercial waste collection companies to better coordinate commercial waste collections in the Sydney CBD.

Snapshots of success



The Metropolitan Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste.
Photo: Nick Langley / City of Sydney

Working together on waste solutions for Greater Sydney

We consistently collaborate with neighbouring councils to strengthen waste and circular systems in our region. One way we do this is through our Resilient Sydney work.

Hosted by us on behalf of all metropolitan Sydney councils, the Resilient Sydney program is about preparing our region for big challenges – and ensuring we have effective, future-ready waste systems is a crucial part of this effort.

In mid-2023, Resilient Sydney partnered with the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils to coordinate the Metropolitan Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste.

Held at Sydney Town Hall, the summit brought together nearly 140 Greater Sydney council leaders to discuss shared waste challenges and possible solutions, as well as how the region can move towards a circular economy.

The summit also sparked the creation of the Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum, which we helped set up through Resilient Sydney in late 2023.

At the forum, Greater Sydney councils work closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority on reducing waste and enhancing the circular economy in our region.

Forum priorities include driving important waste and ~~resource recovery~~ projects, supporting region-based partnerships and actively sharing information to help meet common goals.

A follow-up summit is also planned for 2025.



Our innovative trial uses fly larvae to transform food waste.
Photo: Nick Langley / City of Sydney

Our insect-powered food scraps recycling trial

In early 2025, we started using insects to transform our residents' food scraps into animal feed and fertiliser, in a NSW-first trial with Australian innovator Goterra.

Known as insect farming, this method of food recycling is relatively new to Australia. It uses black soldier fly larvae to convert leftover food into nutrient-rich organic products, which are then sold to farms and businesses.

Compared to composting and other traditional food recycling methods, insect farming has a much smaller emissions footprint and requires a lot less space, making it a promising option for our growing urban area.

The trial itself involves residents' food scraps being processed right in the heart of our city, thanks to the compact infrastructure involved.

Insect farming also offsets the demand for resource-intensive agriculture and creates more circular systems. Insect-farmed animal feed, for example, can replace the need to grow new soybean crops.

An exciting step forward, this trial is helping advance our vision for a localised, low-impact residential food scraps recycling solution.

**Want to recycle your food scraps?
Find out how you can get involved.**

Actions and approach

Our actions

Direction 1

Champion waste avoidance and careful consumption

For our organisation:

Review the goods and services we procure to see where we can consider alternative models that avoid buying new.

Identify procurement mechanisms to support the development of circular economy systems.

Develop guidance about how to choose furniture and furnishings that incorporate circular principles for design, use and end-of-life.

Investigate opportunities to further reduce reliance on single-use items.

Identify mechanisms across procurement and design to increase circularity and minimise disposal of textiles.

For our communities:

Create targeted communications campaigns that inspire our residents to reduce their waste.

Increase opportunities for our residents to grow appropriate, nutritious food and to compost at home.

Create convenient opportunities for our residents to locally share and swap household items.

Maintain waste avoidance education and engagement activities for our residents, schools and community groups.

Support capacity-building programs focused on waste reduction and circularity for businesses in our area.

Showcase emerging circular economy innovations in our area and help businesses and organisations connect and collaborate.

Trial and test new ideas that commercialise circular economy innovations.

Collaborate with government and industry to reduce waste and promote circular solutions through our sustainability partnerships.

Direction 2

Boost reuse, repair and recycling

For our organisation:

Measure and report on the recycled content used in major construction materials we buy.

For our communities:

Create pathways to support increased reuse, repair and refurbishment in our area, including grants and a furniture rehoming trial.

Advocate for suppliers of co-living and on-campus accommodation to explore alternative models such as leasing for furniture and home appliances.

Extend residential food scraps collection across our area by 2030, in line with the state government mandate.

Expand opportunities for our residents to recycle tricky items such as unwearable textiles.

Grow tailored programs to increase participation and reduce contamination in recycling services for apartment buildings and social housing in our area.

Explore opportunities to expand Return and Earn collection points in our area.

Direction 3

Foster circular design

For our organisation:

Review our design and construction activities to better incorporate circular design principles.

Create a circular fit-out process for refurbishment of our managed properties.

Audit materials for our major properties and assets projects to increase opportunities to retain, reuse and recycle.

For our communities:

Promote and encourage the use of circular design principles by developers, architects and construction contractors.

Advocate for improved circular design standards in state and national built environment policies and for their use in significant planning projects in our area.

Support the growth of urban agriculture within a sustainable food system and investigate how we might further design and plan for this in our area.

Direction 4

Keep our city clean

For our organisation:

Investigate systems and innovations to increase recycling and recovery outcomes in our event waste services.

For our communities:

Create a dedicated program to address recurring waste issues where standard approaches do not work and bespoke solutions are required.

Communicate our roles and responsibilities, including what waste services we provide and their service levels, as well as residents' responsibilities around their bins and waste collection.

Check in regularly with residents and make sure waste charges are equitable.

Update our waste management development controls and guidelines to respond to changes in technology, data, services, waste streams, and state policy and requirements.

Talk to small businesses in our area to encourage good waste management practices and increased ~~resource recovery~~.

Track changes and growth in the use of our street litter bins and investigate options to reduce waste and increase ~~resource recovery~~.

Direction 5

Build resilient waste and circular systems

For our organisation:

Plan for future cleansing and ~~resource recovery~~ services that respond to how our area will grow and meet the needs of our communities.

For our communities:

Plan for renewal of our long-term processing contracts and review our services to further incentivise reducing waste, increase ~~resource recovery~~ and manage costs with minimal effect on residents.

Trial innovative new services and products that will contribute to achieving our waste avoidance and emissions reduction targets.

Participate in regional, state and federal partnerships and projects that support national waste and circular economy targets.

Advocate at the state and federal level for adequate waste infrastructure and effective product stewardship regulation.

Explore opportunities to work with the NSW Government, commercial business organisations and commercial waste collection companies to better coordinate commercial waste collections in the Sydney CBD.

How we'll achieve them

The directions and actions presented in this strategy represent the result of work with our employees, communities, industry and other government agencies.

We look forward to realising the vision of the strategy in partnership with them.

Our actions will be incorporated into our relevant operational and business plans.

We'll track and regularly report on our progress through our existing yearly plans and frameworks.

It's also expected that government and industry will initiate their own actions, and we'll continue to push for and help inform new policies and projects that drive forward the circular economy.



A planting day at Sydney City Farm. Photo: Renee Nowytarger / City of Sydney

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Attachment C

Engagement Report - Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035

Engagement report – Waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2026-2035



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Executive summary

The City of Sydney is developing the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026–2035. This report summarises what we heard during community engagement carried out in October–November 2025. We asked people to tell us what they think of the strategy directions, and how we can make our waste and recycling services easier to use.

Community feedback shows very strong support for the strategy. People want us to reduce waste, make recycling easier, keep the city clean and build a more circular local economy. They also want to work with us to keep valuable materials in use for longer.

At least **95%** of survey respondents told us they support all the strategy directions.

Key feedback themes included:

Education and awareness: people want clearer information about what can be recycled, how to use our services, and why waste reduction matters. This was the strongest theme across comments from all engagement activities.

Food waste: there was strong support for expanding food scraps recycling, especially for residents in apartments.

Plastic reduction: participants want us to continue reducing single-use plastics and work with businesses to minimise packaging.

Convenient local access: people want more nearby drop-off points, more pickup options, and services that are easy to use without a car.

Reuse and repair: many participants want more access to clothing swaps, repair cafés, sharing libraries and reuse programs.

Litter and cleanliness: people told us some areas need more street cleaning, stronger enforcement and better bin management.

Apartments and strata: residents in high-density areas want more support, clearer advice and better recycling systems in shared buildings.

Business responsibility: participants want businesses to reduce waste, design better products and take responsibility for packaging and disposal.

Council leadership: people want us to lead by example, make our own operations more circular and ensure our services are reliable and easy to access.

Overall, participants strongly support the waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2025–2035 and want us to be ambitious, practical and collaborative. People want a city where recycling is simple, waste is reduced, and circular practices are part of everyday life. They want us to keep working with residents, businesses and community organisations to create a cleaner, more sustainable and more resilient Sydney.

Overview

Background

The City of Sydney is developing our **Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026–2035**. The strategy sets out a 10-year plan to cut down waste, reduce environmental impacts and support a more circular economy across our local area.

The strategy proposes five directions focused on avoiding waste, making reuse and recycling easier, improving product and building design, keeping the city clean, and planning long-term waste and recycling systems that can cope with future needs. It aims to help residents, businesses and visitors reduce waste, choose more sustainable options and access services that support repair, reuse and recycling.

Engagement summary

From **24 September to 5 November 2025**, we asked our community to comment on the draft strategy. The consultation sought feedback on the five directions, barriers to using our recycling services, and what else is needed to move towards a more circular economy.

Engagement activities included an online survey, community pop-ups, a stakeholder workshop, and opportunities for written submissions. The consultation was promoted through Sydney Your Say, email direct marketing, social media ads, and in-person engagement at pop-up sites.

This report details the engagement activities that took place and summarises what we heard.

Purpose of engagement

The purpose of this consultation was to inform our community about the draft strategy and to better understand how well the proposed directions align with community expectations. Feedback gathered during the public exhibition was used to refine and strengthen the final strategy.

Objectives

- Ensure the community is informed about the draft strategy.
 - Gather feedback on priorities, challenges and ideas to support waste reduction and circularity.
-

Engagement reach

A total of 236 written contributions were received across all channels. This includes survey responses, email submissions, and written comments from community pop-ups and a workshop. Promotion and outreach ensured local awareness and encouraged broad participation from residents, community organisations and industry groups. Survey respondents represent a diverse range of ages and household types. Most respondents live in the local government area.

Figure 1. Engagement activity and responses

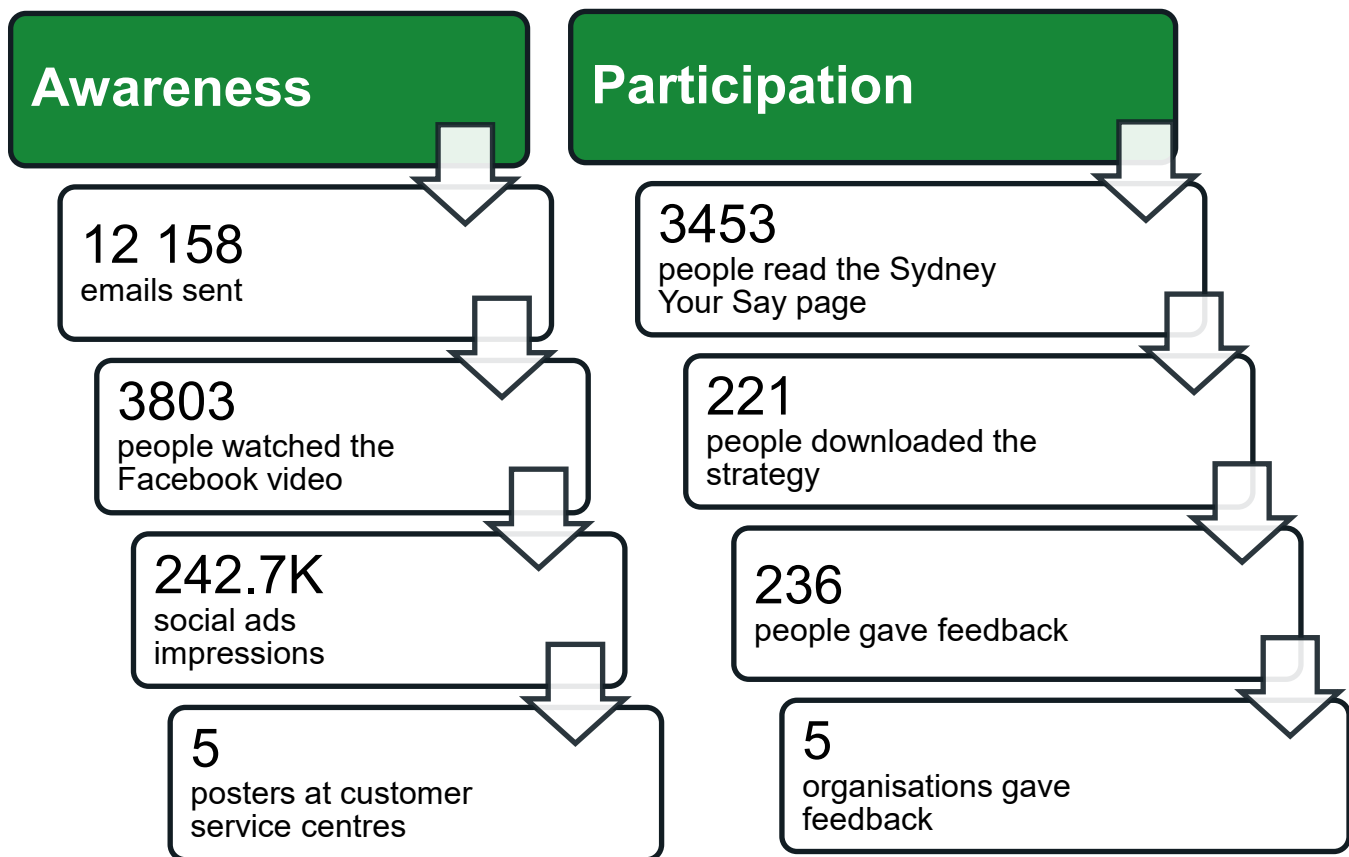


Figure 2. Survey respondent snapshot

Survey respondent snapshot

Respondents live in 40 different suburbs.
88% are City of Sydney residents.

23% live with their family, 26% are single,
45% are in a couple and 4% live with other adults.

47% are aged over 55 years
38% are aged 35-54 years, 11% are aged 18-34.

80% own their home, 20% are renting.

57% live in an apartment, 21% in a townhouse, 13% in a duplex and 11% in a stand-alone house.

93% speak English at home.
62% are female, 30% are male.

*respondents could choose to not provide this information.

Key findings

What we heard about the waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2025–2035

We asked people to tell us what they think about the draft strategy directions, what ideas they have for reducing waste and supporting a circular economy, and what would make it easier to use our recycling and waste services.

Across all engagement activities, people expressed **very strong support for the strategy** and a clear appetite for more action, better education, and easier access to services.

The key findings fall into three areas based on the consultation topics. Response themes were consistent across all engagement channels.

Support for the strategy directions

Community support for the directions in the draft strategy was extremely strong. Between 85% and 95% of survey respondents **strongly supported** each direction, and this was echoed across pop-ups, emails and the community workshop.

Environmental protection and climate action

The most common reason for support was concern for the environment and the need to act on climate change. People want to reduce landfill, protect natural systems and prevent pollution, including plastics entering waterways. Many described the strategy as essential for protecting biodiversity and creating a more sustainable city.

“These strategies will help to sustain life on our planet”.

“Not as much waste in the ocean.”

“Reducing waste and increasing recycling across the board are critical for the health of the planet and to reduce global warming. We all need to play our part.”

It just makes sense.

Many respondents said the five directions simply make sense. People felt the strategy reflects practical, common-sense action that aligns with their own values and expectations. Comments often described the directions as obvious, sensible and equally important, noting that waste reduction, reuse, repair, better design, city cleanliness and long-term planning all work together. This theme reflected a strong sense that the approach is holistic and realistic.

“They simply make sense.”

“We need to do everything we can.”

“I believe strongly in all the issues raised.”

Reducing consumption and preventing waste

People repeatedly said they agree that the most effective action is preventing waste in the first place. They want to see less over-consumption, less packaging, fewer single-use items, and more support for buying less, buying better and extending the life of products.

“We need to consume differently: better with less.”

“People are consuming too much. We can’t continue like this.”

“There is too much waste. People don’t think before tossing.”

Other reasons people gave for supporting the strategy directions include:

- People want us to plan for waste systems that can cope with demand.
- Community members value repair, reuse and sharing.
- The strategy aims to make reuse and recycling easier to access.
- They want to live in a clean city.
- They expect us to show strong leadership on waste and the circular economy.
- They believe education is central to the success of reducing waste.
- They are concerned about the world we leave for future generations.

Ideas to reduce waste and support a circular economy

We asked if there are any other focus areas that are important to reduce waste and move towards a more circular economy. Across survey comments, emails, the workshop and pop-ups, the most mentioned topics were:

Regulations, incentives and corporate responsibility

Calls for stronger regulation and real accountability were some of the clearest messages in the feedback. People expressed strong and sometimes urgent views about the need for tougher rules, meaningful incentives and greater accountability from businesses, industry and government. They said residents cannot solve the waste problem alone when products are over-packaged, built to break, or impossible to recycle. Comments called for bans on excessive packaging and single-use plastics, “right to repair” laws, and action on planned obsolescence. People asked for stronger enforcement for businesses and households that do not act responsibly. Comments suggested incentives to encourage better choices, such as discounts or rate-based rewards.

“I wish you had included another focus, which is to encourage preferably force companies, particularly supermarkets, to avoid unnecessary, excessive and wasteful packaging with products and to participate in recycling the products they manufacture.”

“Help for apartment buildings to better recycle. Penalties for those that don’t.”

“Take back schemes from retailers - encouraging more cradle to grave responsibility from retailers.”

“Must include businesses, can’t just land on individuals... Put actual constraints in place so that there is a genuine cost to not doing business with sustainability in mind. Enshrine right to repair.”

Convenient infrastructure

Many people said it needs to be easier to recycle and reuse everyday items. They want more places to take things, clearer options in public spaces, and simple ways to sort waste at home. Comments focused on having more recycling bins, better drop-off points, services that work well for apartments, and options to drop off items in places people already visit such as supermarkets

and libraries. People also want the City to fix current pick-up issues, reduce the need to travel long distances, and make it easy to recycle tricky items like soft plastics.

“Making recycling a street-level activity rather than individual house collection – like Paris and Barcelona.”

“As a worker within Sydney CBD, I would like the City to implement public recycling bins, food organics bins within public spaces...”

“More plastic recycling facilities, chemical waste.”

Plastic and Packaging

People frequently raised concern about the amount of single-use plastic, excess packaging and items that are difficult to recycle. Many want stronger rules, bans and advocacy, especially for takeaway food, soft plastics, and over-packaged supermarket goods.

“Ban single-use plastic and soy sauce fish.”

“Modifying packaging in supermarkets and shops to more sustainable options; reducing single use takeaway cups and containers.”

“Reduce plastic esp in wrapping and supermarket shopping, anything else that is single use should be banned.”

Education and awareness

Education came through as one of the most common ideas. People want simple, consistent, easy-to-find information about what can be recycled, how to sort waste properly, and how the City’s services work. They expressed concern that confusion or lack of awareness leads to contaminated bins and suggested that more education will result in more people recycling items.

“Education. When you reinforce and keep front of mind by advertising constantly, people will adopt it into their everyday.”

“Innovative education is essential to motivate people.”

Do more to help everyone understand how they can make a contribution to this initiative by running a comprehensive education campaign”

Food waste options

Many respondents said food waste should be a priority. They asked for food-scrap services for all households and centralised composting options. This topic was especially important to people who rent their home and younger people.

“Food waste/scraps recycling for all households would have the biggest impact on waste by far.”

“Implement food waste program for all apartments asap.”

“More organic waste bins and more incentives for businesses to use these. More food scraps bin for all households”

Ideas for improving waste and recycling services

We asked how we can make our waste and recycling services easier to use. Across survey comments, emails, the workshop and pop-ups, the most mentioned topics were:

Services close to home

Many people told us it would be easier to use recycling and waste services if they were available closer to home. This includes requests for more local drop-off points, services in places people already visit, and options that don't require driving. Apartment residents said they need simple, nearby solutions because they cannot store items for long periods or transport them easily. Others asked for expanded doorstep collections, so they don't need to take items to another location. Overall, people want services that are easy to reach and designed for households without cars.

"Pop up drop in centres, without a car it is difficult to get some items to a specific recycling centre."

"More local drop off points."

"I love the doorstep pick-up service."

Clear information

The need for clear, simple information to make good use of recycling and waste services was often mentioned in comments. Several comments highlighted confusion about what can and cannot be recycled, especially for tricky items, and frustration when instructions differ across locations or platforms. Others said information is scattered or hard to find, and they want straightforward guidance in one place. People also asked for clearer communication about service availability, collection rules and upcoming events. Overall, residents want practical, consistent, easy-to-understand information that helps them recycle correctly and reduces contamination.

"More detailed information about what can and can't be recycled in general recycling. Too often am I faced with indecision as to what item I should or should not put in the yellow bin."

"To know about them & how they all work."

"Knowing what I can recycle and where"

"Send me a calendar."

More frequent service

People often said they would like recycling and waste services to be available more frequently or open longer hours. They asked for regular schedules, more collection days, and services that operate weekly or monthly so they can dispose of items without needing to store them for long periods. Several people said more frequent services would be easier to remember and to access. Some asked for services and drop off points to be open longer hours, so they could take items after work.

"At a minimum, 'Recycle it Saturday' should be EVERY SATURDAY."

"More drop off locations. More frequent collections."

"Possibly a few more drop off dates each year (and chemicals) as I travel frequently for work so often miss scheduled Recycle It and Chemical Drop Off dates."

Feedback also showed support for our current waste and recycling service program, with many people using this question to give positive feedback or say that no improvements were needed.

Other suggestions people made to make using waste and recycling services easier include:

- More options for a food waste service, including shared food waste bins
- Pick up services and drop off points that accept a broader range of items
- More services designed for apartment buildings

Feedback from people who rent

We asked survey respondents to tell us if they own or rent the place where they live. We received 26 survey responses from people who rent. The feedback from this group of people broadly aligns to the overall themes and support for the strategy directions is strong. However, compared to the responses from people who own their home, this group was more concerned with education, clear information and convenient infrastructure. The most common reason for supporting the directions was the importance of easy access to convenient services. They raised access to food waste as an important focus area, second only to convenient infrastructure such as community recycling centres and more frequent pick up and drop off services. Many renters support an increase in both regulations and incentives to motivate businesses and community members to recycle responsibly.

Outreach activities

Community pop-ups

We held three pop-up sessions during the exhibition period to speak directly with community members about the waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2025–2035. Pop-ups took place at Customs House Forecourt, Green Square Library, and Glebe Library lawn. Each session included information displays, voting boards, and opportunities for people to share ideas and ask questions. The strategy team spoke with passers-by, explained the five directions, and invited people to leave feedback using sticky-dot voting and comment boards. Across the three sites, we collected **91 votes** of support for the strategy directions and **61 comments** reflecting a mix of local priorities and practical suggestions for reducing waste and improving recycling.

The recycling service most used by pop-up voters are doorstep recycling, bulky household pick up, food scraps recycling, recycling stations and recycle it Saturday.

Comments on priorities and improving recycling services included:

- access to **food scraps** recycling for everyone.
- **Education and clearer signage** on what can be recycled.
- **Soft plastics** solutions and retailer take-back schemes.
- More **bins and facilities** in public places and apartments.
- **Community sharing and repair** programs (swaps, repair cafés).
- Continued focus on **clean streets** and **reducing single-use plastics**.

Community workshop

We held a small in-person workshop at Town Hall House with **7 community members** on Tuesday 21 October. The session included a short presentation on the Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2025–2035, followed by group discussion and activities about waste challenges, priorities and opportunities.

Participants were highly engaged and supportive of the strategy directions. The conversation echoed many of the themes raised in the survey and at pop-ups, particularly strong interest in making recycling easier, reducing unnecessary packaging, and supporting reuse and repair in the local area.

Participants focused on the importance of clear communication and practical support for reuse and repair. They asked for better information on rates notices, case studies showing our organisation applying circular principles, and more promotion of reuse activities such as clothing swaps. People strongly supported container deposit opportunities, the new sustainable buildings grant, and the idea of tools—such as apps and digital platforms—that help residents find reuse and repair services. They noted that not everyone uses social media and rely on City newsletters and emails for updates. Libraries were praised as trusted places for community services, and participants asked how we will continue engagement and communication once the strategy is adopted.

Survey responses

We received **159 responses** to the online survey. The questions asked people if they support the proposed directions in the *Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2025–2035*, why they do, or don't, support the directions, if there are any other priorities that we should focus on, and what would help them reduce waste or use our recycling services more easily. The survey provided both multiple-choice options and space for people to share comments. WE also asked people to tell us about their household size and type, to better understand the different experiences and needs of different people. The main themes of survey responses are represented in the key findings section above. This section details the answers to each survey question.

Feedback on the strategy's priorities

We asked survey respondents how important each direction proposed in the strategy is, in their opinion, to cut down waste, reduce our environmental impact and support a circular economy. The results show clear support, especially for planning long term waste and recycling systems that can cope with future needs. Support for each priority is detailed below in figure 3.

Figure 3. Responses to the survey question 'In your opinion, how important is each direction?'

Direction 1. Encouraging people to reduce waste and buy more carefully



Direction 2. Making reuse, repair and recycling more convenient and accessible



Direction 3. Designing buildings and products to last and be reused



Direction 4. Keeping our streets clean and safe from litter

92%

strongly support

6% Somewhat support

0% Do not support

2% Neutral/not sure

Direction 5. Planning long-term waste and recycling systems that can cope with future needs

95%

strongly support

5% Somewhat support

0% Do not support

0% Neutral/not sure

Reasons for support levels

We asked survey respondents to tell us in their words why they had given those ratings.

As detailed in the key findings section, the main reasons people gave for supporting the directions are concern about the environment, a desire to reduce consumption and general agreement.

People who said they somewhat support some of the directions emphasised that easy access to convenient services is fundamental for the strategy to be effective.

People who were not sure about some of the directions expressed concern about litter in the streets.

In total, 4 respondents said they disagreed with one or more directions. One respondent expressed dissatisfaction with current waste services, one asked for larger bins, one asked for Council to do more, and one gave no comment.

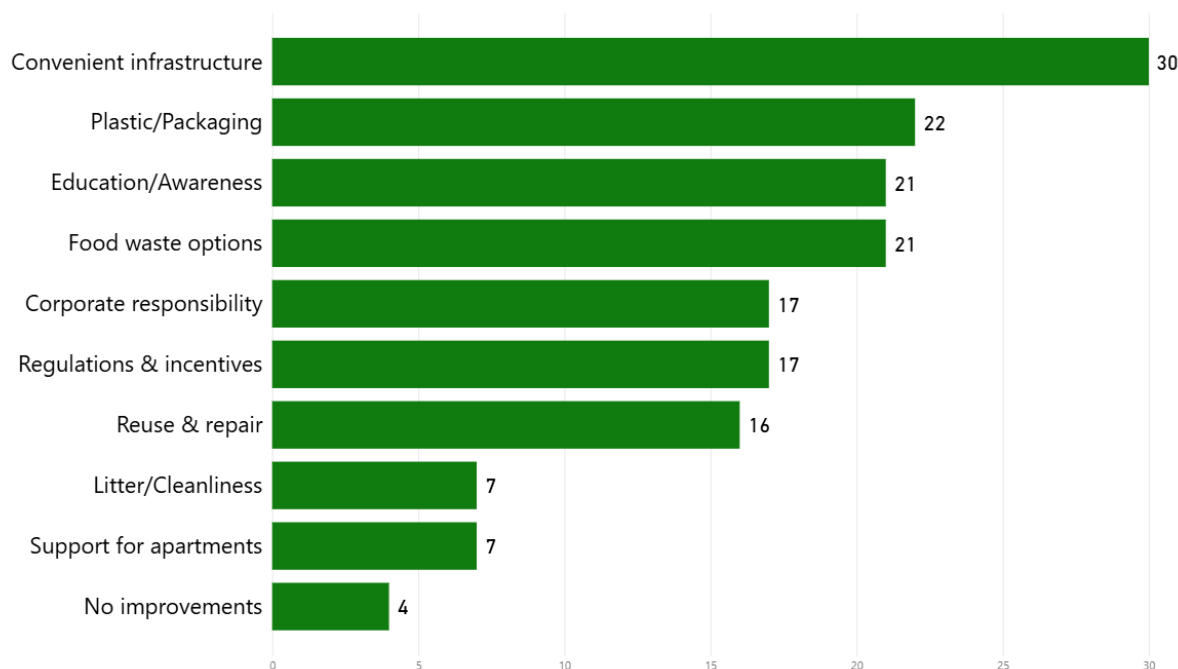
Other focus areas

We asked survey respondents if there are any other focus areas that are important to reduce waste and move towards a more circular economy. Of the total 159 respondents, 120 answered this question. Most of the responses align with actions in the draft strategy. The topics raised in these responses are described in the key findings section of this report. The graph in figure 4. shows how many times each topic was raised in total.

Figure 4. Key themes in comments on other focus areas

Focus area comments

Are there any other focus areas that are important



Recycling services

To improve our understanding of how familiar survey respondents are with our current waste and recycling services, we asked them to tell us which services they had used in the last 12 months.

All 159 respondents answered the question. Most had used at least one service, and many had used more than one. The most used services were bulky household pick up, the food scraps recycling services and our doorstep recycling service. In total, 8 respondents said they did not know about any of these services. Three respondents said they were aware, but the services are not convenient, and three said they were not residents of our local area. Figure 5 shows the number of responses for each option.

Figure 5. Waste or recycling services used in the last 12 months

Bulky household pick-up	82
Food scraps recycling service	79
Doorstep recycling service	75
Recycling stations	61
Recycle It Saturday	57
Ultimo recycling pop-up	37
Household Chemical CleanOut events	26
None, I didn't know about them	8
None, I knew about them but they aren't convenient for me	3
None, I'm not a resident	3

Challenges and preferred improvements to recycling services

We asked survey respondents to choose their main challenges in using our recycling services from a multiple-choice list of common barriers. They could choose as many options as they liked. We then asked them to tell us in their own words what would make it easier to use our waste and recycling services. All 159 survey respondents answered the multiple-choice question, and 120 people answered the open text question.

The challenges most nominated from the list are access to the drop off location (85 votes), knowing what’s available (58 votes) and finding time to use the services (45 votes). These top 3 challenges were consistent across age categories between 35 and 65 years. People aged under 35 and over 65 found ‘knowing how to use the service’ to be a challenge more often than finding time to use the service. Figure 6 shows the number of respondents who selected each challenge on the multiple-choice list.

The main ways that people told us we can make our waste and recycling services easier to use are described in the key findings section of this report. The graph in figure 6. shows how many times each topic was raised in total.

Figure 6. Main challenges to using our recycling services

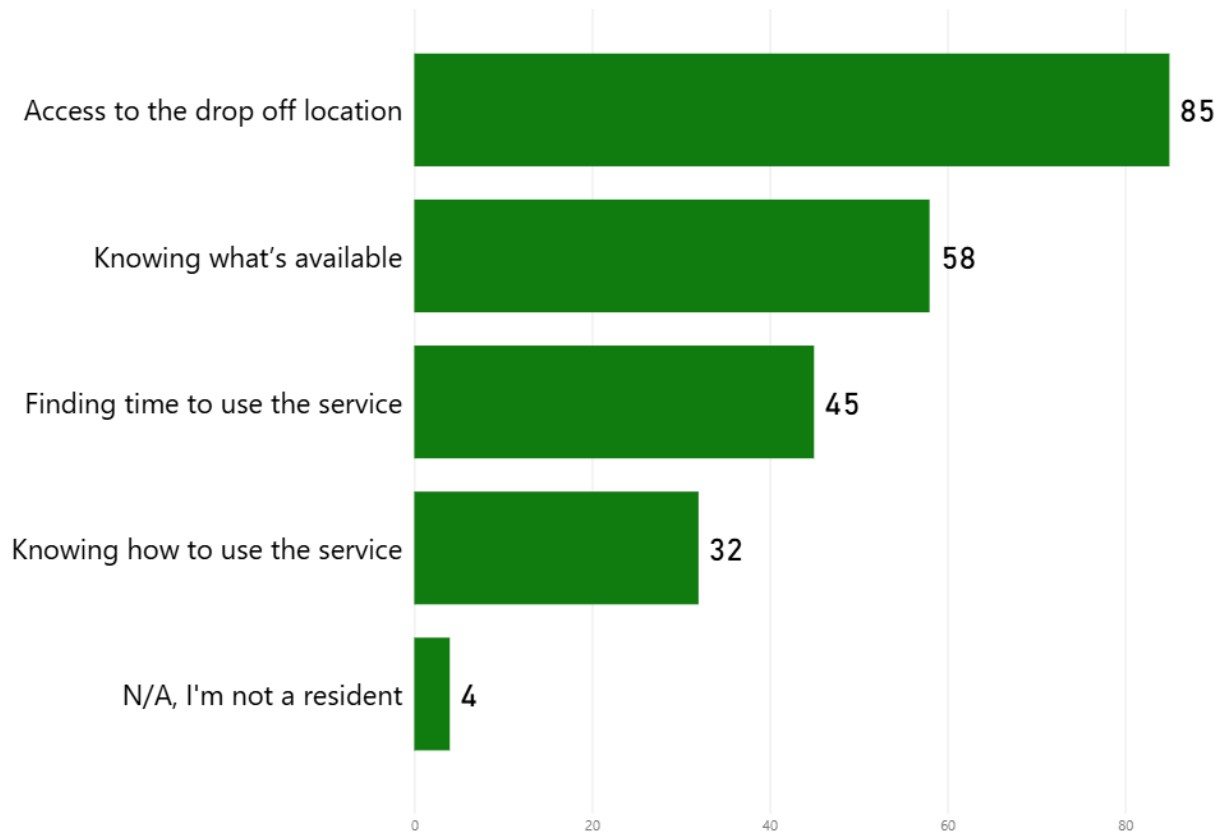
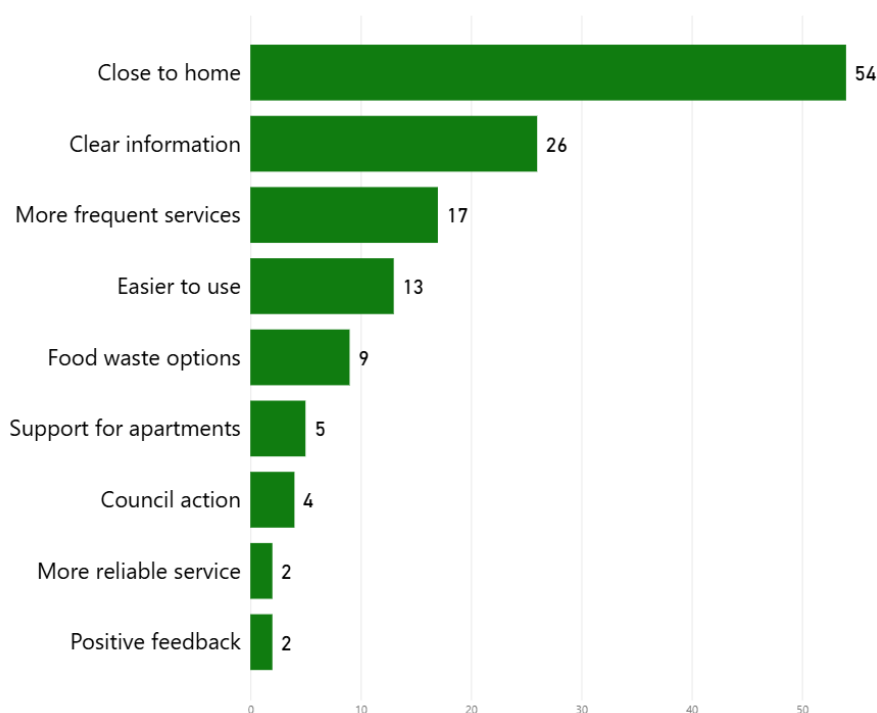


Figure 7. Key themes in comments on making our waste and recycling services easier to use



Respondent households

To better understand the perspective of their comments, we asked survey respondents to tell us about the people living in their household, the type of dwelling they live in, and if they rent or own the place where they live.

Respondents represent a good cross section of couples, single people and family groups.

Most survey respondents own the home they live in. Some respondents (16%) rent the place they live in.

Respondents represent a good cross section of people who live in apartment blocks of different scale, townhouses, semi-detached and standalone houses. Most respondents live in an apartment.

Figure 8 shows the number of responses to each option in the questions on household size and ownership. Figure 9 shows the number of responses to each option for type of dwelling.

Figure 8. Responses to household size and ownership

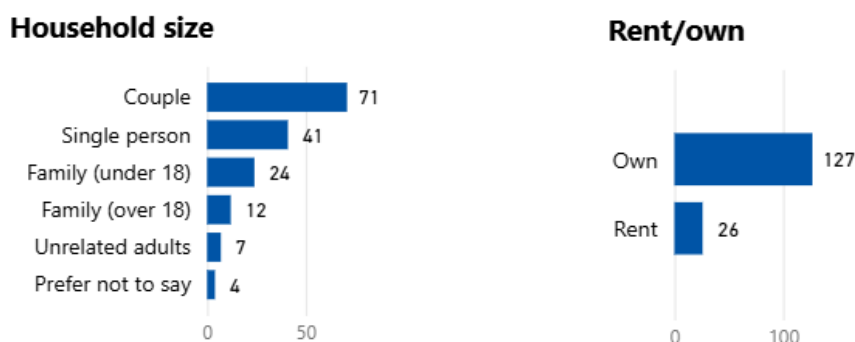
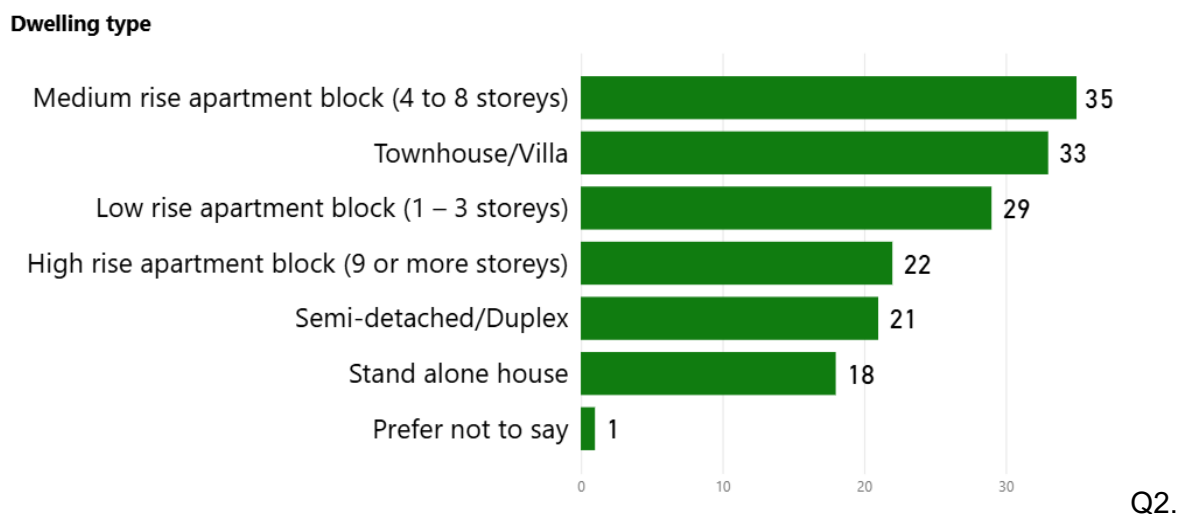


Figure 9. Responses to ‘What type of dwelling do you live in?’



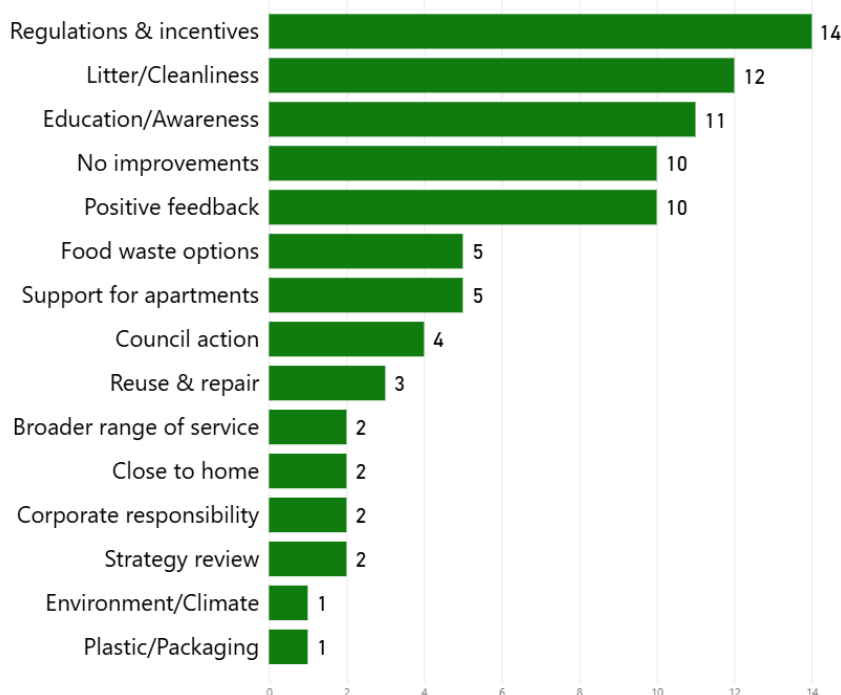
Other comments

We asked survey respondents if there is anything else they would like to tell us about the draft Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2025–2035. In total, 64 people answered this question. Most re-emphasised points they made in earlier comments, especially support for regulations and incentives to motivate people to consume and recycle responsibly, the importance of a clean city, and the importance of education and awareness.

Almost a third of the comments (20) stated there were no improvements required to our services, stated general support for the strategy or gave general positive feedback.

Figure 10. shows how many times each topic was raised in total.

Figure 10. Key themes in other comments



Responses from businesses and community organisations

We received feedback from 5 organisations including 3 community organisations, one business, and one peak body, expressing strong support for the strategy. The feedback in these submissions aligns to the broader themes described in this report.

Additionally, these submissions included the following suggestions.

Support upstream innovation

Encourage business models that prevent waste, such as reuse-as-a-service, refill stations, and digital sharing platforms. Provide grants or pilot programs for local innovators, especially SMEs and social enterprises, to grow the circular economy.

Embed circularity in regulation

Integrate circular design principles into planning controls, including material efficiency, design for disassembly, and waste minimisation in construction and demolition projects. This shift prioritises reuse and repair over recycling, aligning with global best practices.

Establish a circular economy hub

Create a permanent hub combining reuse drop-off points, repair workshops, upcycling studios, and second-hand retail. This would expand successful initiatives like “Recycle It Saturday” and foster community engagement.

Incentivise repair

Offer subsidies, rebates, or GST waivers for repair services and provide affordable spaces for repair-focused enterprises. These measures aim to make repair cost-competitive with replacement.

Set circularity standards for city projects

Mandate minimum recycled content and circularity scores in public construction projects using tools like the Materials Circularity Indicator (MCI) and material passports.

Develop industry guidance

Form a Circular Design Advisory Group with developers, architects, engineers, and researchers to co-create practical standards for different asset types.

Address systemic waste issues

- **Food delivery:** Regulate excessive packaging and address e-bike congestion linked to delivery services.
- **Fashion industry:** Challenge overconsumption and unethical practices that drive waste.
- **Construction:** Combat premature demolition and promote longevity in building design.
- **City cleanliness:** Increase street sweeping, tackle illegal dumping, and improve bin management. Issues are linked to housing, job precarity, and short-term rentals.

Build resilient waste systems

Focus on reducing short-lived products that appear cheap but cause environmental harm. Advocate for an economic shift prioritising quality over quantity.

Foster community initiatives

Examples include libraries of things, repair cafés, and cooperative recycling programs. Education, enforcement, and incentives remain critical to success.

Submissions table

Throughout the consultation period we received written feedback on the draft strategy through survey responses (159), emails (9), comment boards at community pop sites (61 comments) and a workshop (7 participants). This table lists the topics and issues raised in the written feedback.

Topic/issue raised	Total (number of times raised)
Requests for waste and recycling services that are accessible at home or close to home, such as doorstep collections and more local drop off points	58
Requests and support for proactive education to raise awareness	39
Concern about the impact of waste on our environment	39
General support for the strategy 'making sense'	39
Strong support for the value of reuse & repair	35
Strong support for the importance of reducing consumption	31
Requests for convenient infrastructure to make recycling easier, such as shared bins, drop off points in places people often visit, and comprehensive collections/drop off points that accept all types of materials	30
Concern about litter and the general cleanliness of the city	30
Requests for clear information on recycling services, including what can be recycled, where and when services are offered and how to use the services	29
Requests for food waste options available for everyone	29
Requests for more frequent services for waste and especially for recycling	29
Support for regulations and incentives to motivate businesses, strata and community members to provide and utilise waste and recycling services	28
General support for the value of long-term planning	23
General concern about the volume of plastic and packaging	23
Requests for more council action, such as more council provided recycling services	22
Support for the importance of services being accessible and convenience	19
Calls for corporate responsibility to reduce waste and provide recycling services	19
Statements that no improvements are needed to our services	17

Engagement report – Waste reduction and circular materials strategy 2026-2035

Topic/issue raised	Total (number of times raised)
Requests to provide more support for apartment residents to recycle	15
General positive feedback and support for the strategy	13
Requests to provide a broader range of services	10
Concern about the impact of current waste management on future generations	8
Calls for urgent action	8
Requests for more reliable waste services	3
Strategy review	2
Concern about a rate rise to enable the strategy	1

Engagement activities

Overview of engagement undertaken

Sydney Your Say webpage

A [Sydney Your Say webpage](#) was created. The page included an overview of the strategy directions, an electronic copy of the draft strategy, a survey and other key information about the consultation. The page was viewed by 3453 people, and the draft strategy was downloaded 221 times.

Online feedback form via Survey Monkey

The community and stakeholders were able to give feedback using an online feedback form. A link to the feedback form was provided on the Sydney Your Say website.

Sydney Your Say e-news

The consultation was included in the Sydney Your Say October 2025 e-newsletters (4064 subscribers).

Notification letter

An email was sent to 12 158 key stakeholders, including local community groups, accessibility advocacy groups, local chambers of commerce, community garden groups, and people who subscribe to our recycling e-newsletters, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal.

Community consultation workshops / community meetings

A community workshop was held on Tuesday 21 October and was attended by 7 residents and stakeholders. Their feedback has been incorporated into the key findings of this report.

On-site signage

Posters with a QR link to the consultation were displayed notice boards at customer service centres, inviting people to give feedback on the proposal.

Other activities

Support was sought from Better Renting NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW to raise awareness of the consultation with people who rent.

Marketing and communications

A total of 5 Meta ads (Facebook & Instagram) reel placement resulted in

- 242.7K impressions
- 3 762 total link clicks
- 1.55% avg. CTR
- 62.9K total engagement

Appendix

Appendix A: Top performing ad

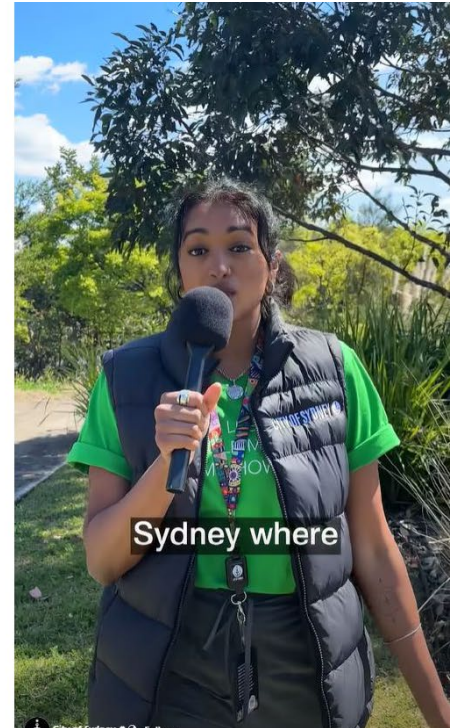
Top performing ad Facebook & Instagram

Waste Ad 2 – No music

- 71K impressions
- 1,288 total clicks with a 1.81% click through rate
- 703 Facebook clicks & 585 Instagram clicks
- 3,803 Facebook video through plays (number of times the video has been watched to completion)
- 331 likes/reactions and 20 Comments

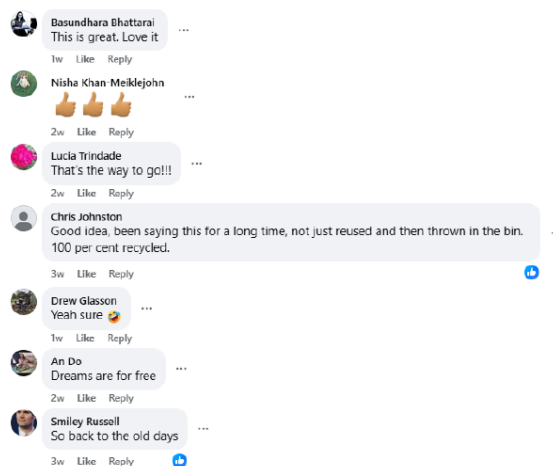


Digital Content team found ads without music and b-roll snippets performed strongly when it delivered a strong key message.

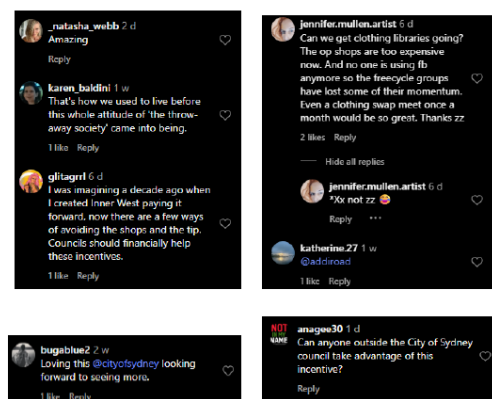


Appendix B: Sample of community sentiment from reel placement comments

Facebook comments



Instagram comments



CITY OF SYDNEY

Appendix C: Sydney Your Say enews article

Sydney Your Say



Have your say on our 10-year waste strategy

Imagine a Sydney where nothing is wasted. Where everything you own can either be reused, repaired or recycled, not thrown away.

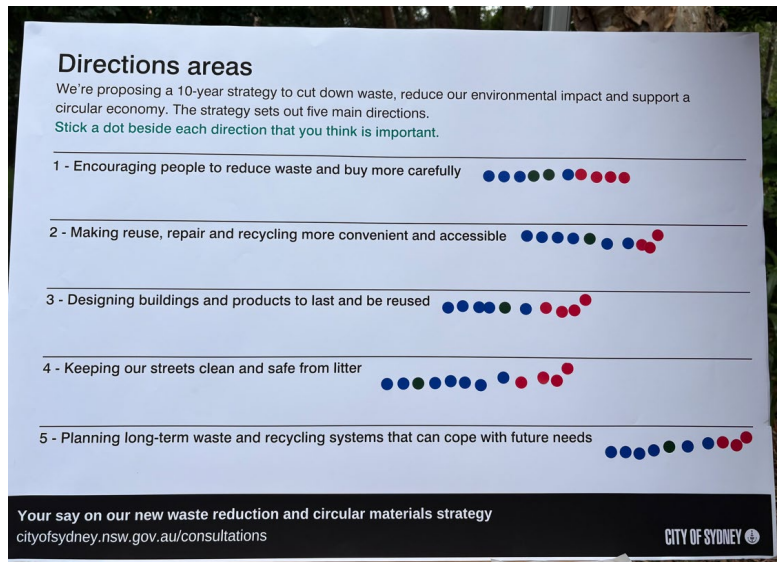
That's the goal of our new draft waste reduction and circular materials strategy. It sets our 10-year vision for an even more sustainable, resilient future.

Have we got it right? Attend a community workshop next week or complete our survey by Wednesday 5 November.

[Read more](#)

Appendix D: Community pop-up consultation stall outside Glebe library 23 October 2025







Item 4.

Victoria Street Public Domain Upgrade

File No: X117828

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Victoria Street, Darlinghurst.

The proposal for the Victoria Street Public Domain Upgrade project includes a new streetscape design with wider footpaths, formalised outdoor dining, concrete unit paving and bluestone kerb, bi-directional separated cycleway, undergrounding of electrical cables, new trees, landscaping and low-level planting, replacement of inefficient lighting with Smartpoles and LED lighting, bike racks, seating, raised pedestrian crossing and continuous footpath treatments.

From 8 September to 20 October 2025, we asked the community for feedback on the proposal to upgrade Victoria Street. A dedicated project webpage via the City's "Sydney Your Say" website was created. A notification letter was sent on 8 September 2025 to over 2,000 properties and businesses and pop-up events were held on 17 and 20 September 2025. Community feedback was in support of the proposal. Community suggestions have been incorporated into the concept design as part of design development.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council endorse the design for the Victoria Street Public Domain Upgrade, as described in the subject report and shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for progression to detailed design, documentation and construction of the works.

Attachments

Attachment A. Refined Concept Design

Attachment B. Engagement Report

Background

1. Victoria Street is defined as a Neighbourhood Hub Street in the City's Streets Design Code, and is a focal point for residents, businesses, shopping, meeting, culture and health. Frontages along Victoria Street are a complement of residential, commercial and special purpose, making it a major destination for both the local community and visitors to the area.
2. Victoria Street is identified in the City's Liveable Green Network Strategy and Masterplan. The City has allocated funding within the long-term financial plan to upgrade the streetscape of Victoria Street, between Craigend and Burton Streets.
3. The last comprehensive upgrade of the street was in 1994 by the then South Sydney Council. This upgrade will bring this section of Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, to the City's Neighbourhood Hub Street palette, in line with the City's Sydney Street Code.
4. In November 2018, Council endorsed the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030, for incorporation into the City's community strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030. The Strategy includes an overall proposed Bike Network.
5. Priority 1 of the Strategy and Action Plan is to connect the bike network, as there is strong evidence that safe connected cycling infrastructure is essential to making bike riding a viable transport option for much of the population.
6. The Strategy and Action Plan target is to complete 100% of the regional route network and 60% of the local route network by 2030.
7. The upgrade aligns with the following directions in the City's Community Strategic Plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision:
 - (a) Direction 8 - by 2050 people will use public transport, walk or cycle to travel to and from work.
 - (b) Direction 9 - by 2030 every resident in the local area will be around a 10-minute walk to what they need for daily life.
8. The upgrade will contribute to the City's Urban Forest Strategy, 2023, Direction 2 - which expands on the targets for canopy cover within streets as part of the Greening Sydney Strategy and builds upon its actions towards a cooler, calmer, and more resilient city.
9. A concept design has been prepared that:
 - (a) enhances the character of the area for locals and visitors and encourages a sense of belonging through additional greening and seating, and improved lighting and footpath treatments
 - (b) improves pedestrian safety and connectivity along Victoria Street, between Craigend and Burton Streets by calming traffic and enhancing opportunities for walking
 - (c) benefits local businesses by supporting increased pedestrian activity, as well as provide space for alfresco dining or display of goods and services in public spaces

- (d) provides a key section of the local bike network along Victoria Street and
 - (e) increases the resilience of the infrastructure by undergrounding all overhead electrical cables, which reduces their susceptibility to extreme weather and provides opportunities for new tree planting and increased canopy coverage.
10. In summary, street improvements will include:
- (a) undergrounding of all overhead cables in Victoria Street and removal of timber poles
 - (b) footpath widening throughout Victoria Street
 - (c) bi-directional separated cycleway
 - (d) pedestrian improvements at signalised intersections.
 - (e) upgraded pedestrian crossing at Surrey Street
 - (f) in-lane bus stop
 - (g) replacing existing pavements with concrete unit pavers
 - (h) installation of Continuous Footpath Treatments and
 - (i) installation of new garden beds, street trees, Smartpoles and energy efficient LED lighting, bike racks and seating.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

11. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 3 - Public places for all - Our local main streets are thriving hubs with their own distinctive characters.
 - (i) The project will provide an improved public domain that meets the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides opportunities for social interaction.

- (b) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - more people choose to walk and ride bikes. The city is greener and calmer with more space for people on the streets.
 - (i) The project improves pedestrian amenity and safety through enhanced footpath treatments, localised footpath widening and continuous footpath treatments, improved lighting and increased amenities such as seating and bubblers.
 - (ii) The project provides a key section in a network of safe, linked pedestrian and cycle paths integrated with green spaces throughout both the city and inner Sydney.

Organisational Impact

- 12. The organisational impact of the Victoria Street project is taken into consideration as part of the City's annual Operational Plan review.

Risks

- 13. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the concept design and consultation phases. These include safety for people walking, riding and driving, environmental and economic impacts, community concerns and emergency service access provisions. The risks will be further addressed in the forthcoming design development and documentation phases.
- 14. Undergrounding of overhead cables involves the modification of private connections, which will require approval from the property owners.
- 15. The City does not control, operate or own signalised intersections. The proposed pedestrian improvements at signalised intersections are subject to approval from Transport for New South Wales.
- 16. The works will be managed in line with the tolerances set out in the City's Risk Appetite Statement, particularly the following:
 - (a) Environmental and Sustainability Risk Appetite
 - (i) We are dedicated to actively identifying and addressing environmental risks associated with our activities and services. We prioritise prevention and proactive measures to minimise our ecological footprint, conserve resources and protect ecosystems.
 - (b) People
 - (i) We are committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our workers, residents, visitors and others who interact with our assets, operations and services.
 - (ii) We acknowledge that achieving a risk-free environment is not feasible, especially in the public domain. We therefore aim to minimise health, safety and wellbeing risks within our organisation and in the public domain as far as reasonably practicable and in keeping with our legal obligations.

- (c) Infrastructure, Technology, Assets and Property
 - (i) We acknowledge the diverse expectations of our stakeholders, including the community, ratepayers, regulatory bodies and elected officials. Our risk appetite considers stakeholder expectations and seeks to align infrastructure management practices with their needs, while maintaining a responsible and sustainable approach.
 - (ii) We acknowledge our responsibility to protect and enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of our community. Our risk appetite emphasises the integration of sustainable practices into infrastructure asset management, considering environmental impacts, climate change resilience and community engagement.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 17. The project will provide improved amenities for local residents, businesses and visitors to the City to encourage walking and social interaction.
- 18. People will have improved access to safe walking and cycling infrastructure to enjoy a healthy lifestyle with an increased level of physical activity. As part of the City's bike network, this project will contribute to better connected neighbourhoods, increased transport choice and a more socially connected, active and healthier community. Cycling provides a sustainable, low-cost private transport option for people.
- 19. The project will improve the material quality of the public domain. This provides opportunities for the community to highlight the characteristics of Victoria Street.

Environmental

- 20. This project aligns with the City of Sydney's environment performance objectives and targets. Key initiatives include:
 - (a) retention of existing street trees along Victoria Street and the addition of approximately 12 new trees (a 22% increase)
 - (b) undergrounding of overhead wires to provide the opportunity for increased canopy cover for cooler streets
 - (c) cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport
 - (d) construction waste - all recyclable construction waste will be diverted from landfill in line with the City's Recycling and Waste Policies
 - (e) materials - materials adopted for this project are in line with standard City of Sydney approved products, which are selected from responsible manufacturers and sourced within Australia.

Economic

- 21. The upgrade will provide additional footpath space that can be used by businesses for alfresco dining and display of goods or services in public space.

22. The upgrade will add to the area's attractiveness for families and visitors, increasing pedestrian foot traffic along shop frontages, which may assist the viability of local businesses.
23. Connecting the bike network has a significantly positive benefit to cost ratio as outlined in the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030.

Financial Implications

24. The FY26 Long Term Financial Plan includes an allocation of \$15 million for the Victoria Street Public Domain Upgrade project.
25. There are sufficient funds in the Capital Works Budget for 2025/26 and future year forward estimates as set out in the City's approved Long Term Financial Plan to deliver this project.

Relevant Legislation

26. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
27. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
28. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act) (Part 4 and 5). A planner will review the scope of works to assess consent requirements for the project under the EPA Act.
29. Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

30. Key dates for the project are as follows:

(a)	Local Pedestrian, Cycling, Traffic Calming and Transport Forum	March 2026
(b)	Detailed design finalisation	December 2026
(c)	Service investigation and relocation planning	Late 2026
(d)	Pre-construction approvals - Transport for NSW and Ausgrid	Early 2027
(e)	Construction commencement (pending approvals)	Early 2027
(f)	Construction completion	December 2028

Public Consultation

31. Prior to public consultation, the design was informed by advice from the City's Design Advisory Panel (DAP) in June 2025.
32. Ongoing stakeholder consultation is being conducted with Transport for NSW, NSW Fire and Rescue, St Vincents Hospital, NSW Ambulance Services and King Cross Police. All stakeholders are supportive of the proposal.
33. Public consultation commenced with the distribution of over 2,000 letters to the surrounding area on 8 September 2025, following which community feedback was received until 20 October 2025 via the City's "Sydney Your Say" website.
34. During the feedback period, 2 pop-up meetings were held on the 17 and 20 September 2025 and were attended by approximately 50 people.
35. A dedicated Sydney Your Say webpage with an interactive map was provided, for the community to have their say. The webpage was visited 1,869 times during the consultation period.
36. There was a total of 219 responses via an online survey, interactive map, phone calls and email submissions, summarised as follows:
 - (a) 82% of responses were in strong support for the upgrade, cycleway, formalised outdoor dining and additional greening or provided feedback on improving the design which will be incorporated into the detailed design.
 - (b) 18% of responses did not support part or all of the upgrade with the majority of these responses not in favour of the cycleway.
 - (c) No net loss of parking was positively received.
 - (d) Businesses were receptive and supported the public domain upgrade, indicating it should encourage higher visitor numbers.
 - (e) 34 submissions raised concerns around traffic congestion, emergency vehicle access and Craigend Street slip lane removal which will be addressed as part of the detailed design.
 - (f) 19 people requested the relocation of the advertising panel at Craigend Street intersection, which is under investigation for feasibility.

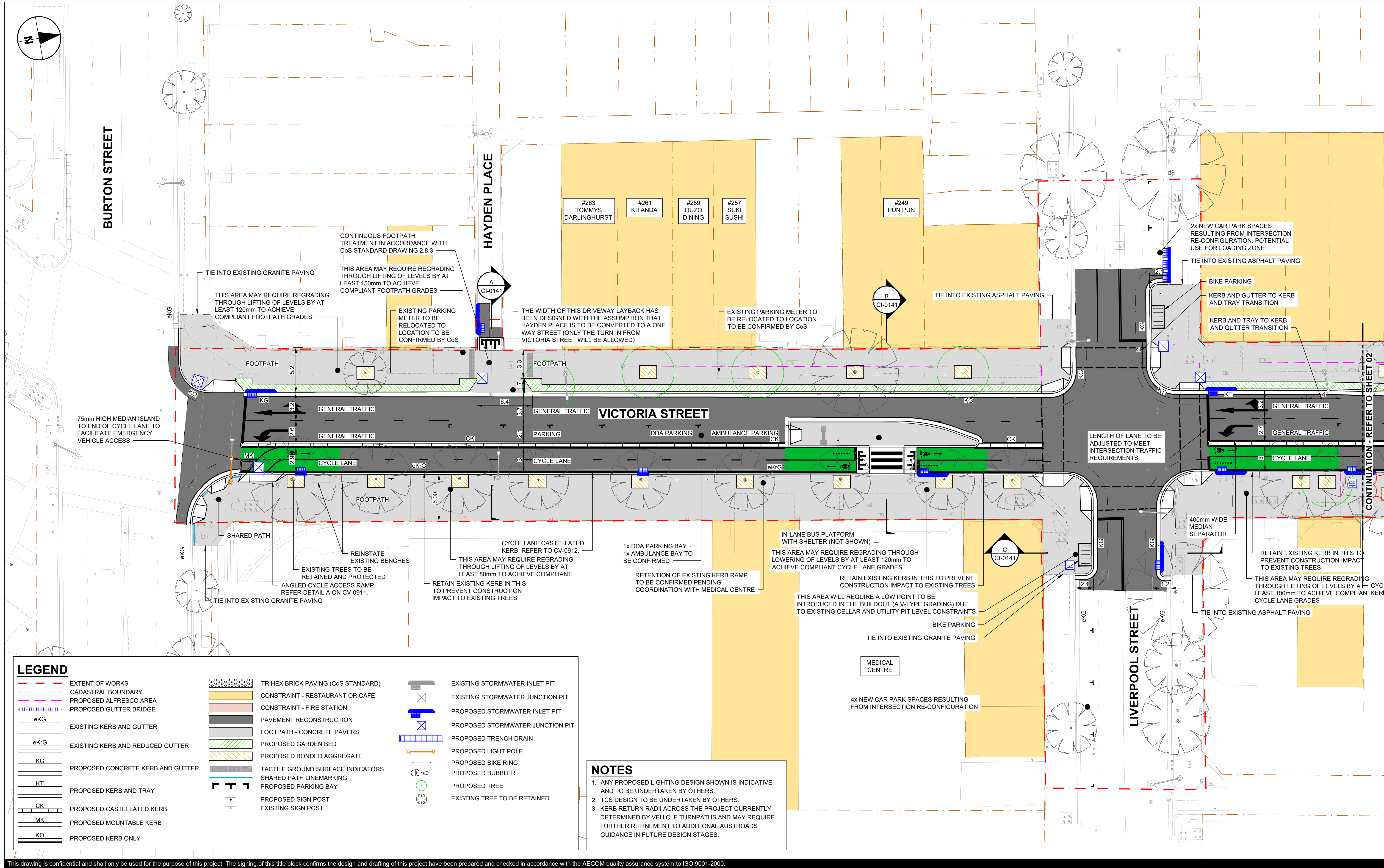
VERONICA LEE

Executive Director City Services

Amy Day, Project Manager - Design

Attachment A

Refined Concept Design

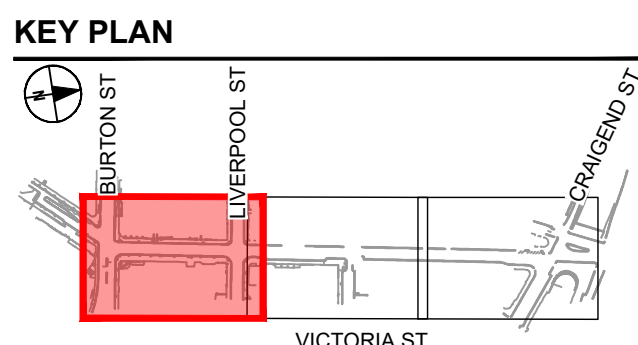
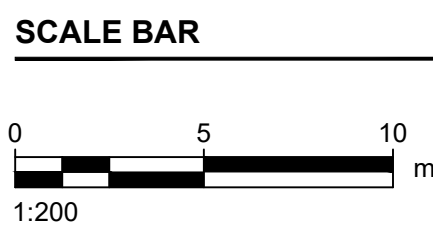


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PROJECT
Victoria Street



REGISTRATION

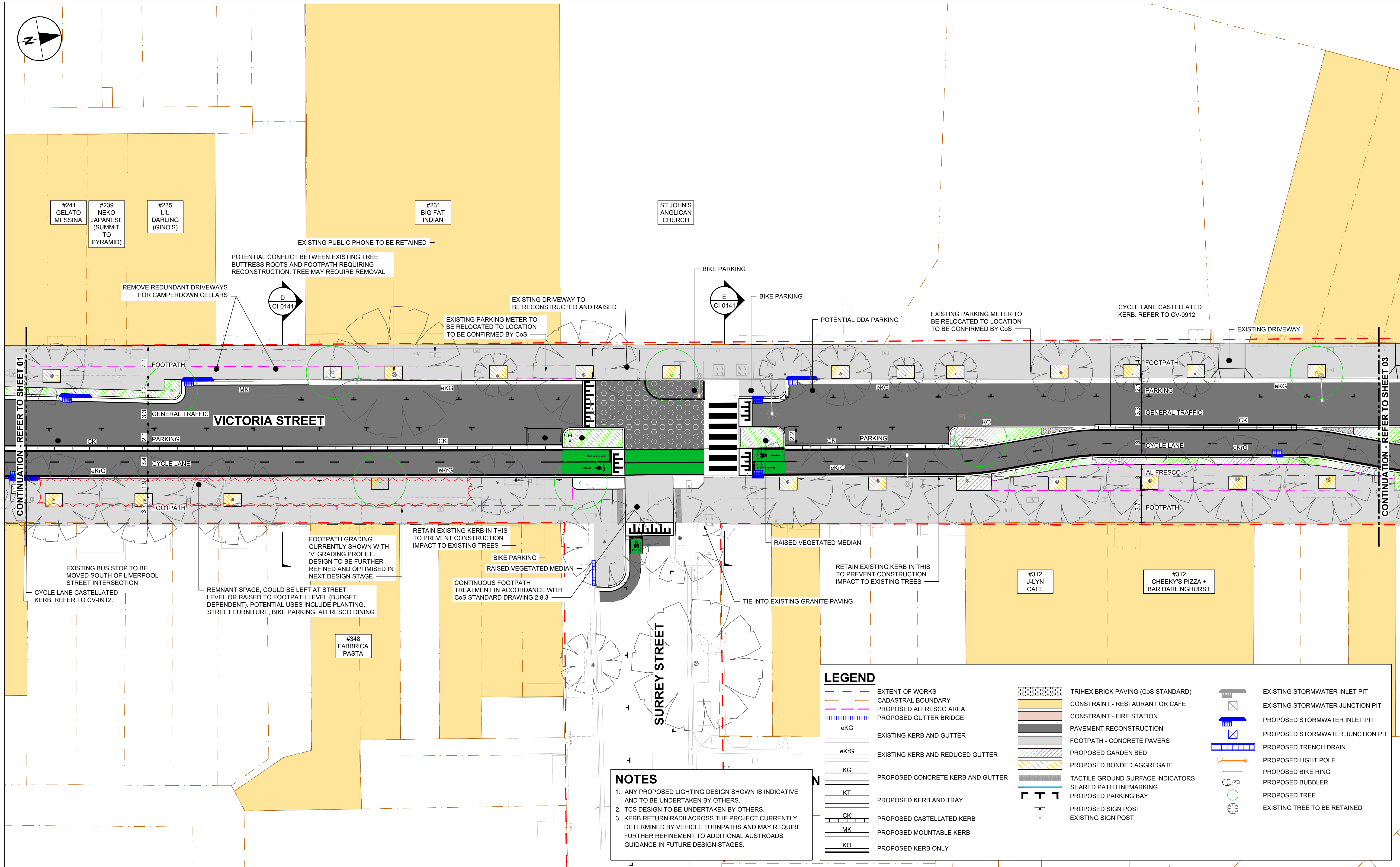
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PROJECT DATA		
DATUM	SURVEY	

ISSUE/REVISION		
01	07.11.2025	50% DETAILED DESIGN
I/R	DATE	DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER
60750589
SHEET TITLE
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
SHEET 01

SHEET NUMBER
60750589-004-SHT-1000-CV-0101

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

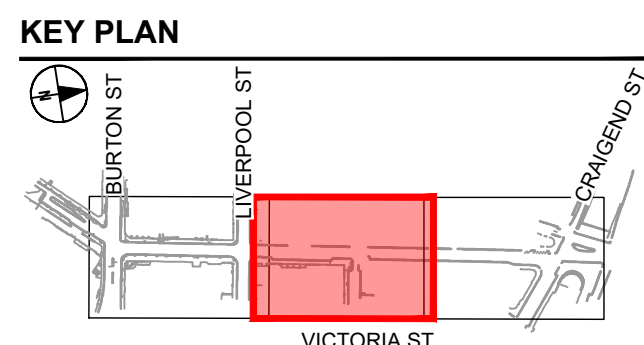
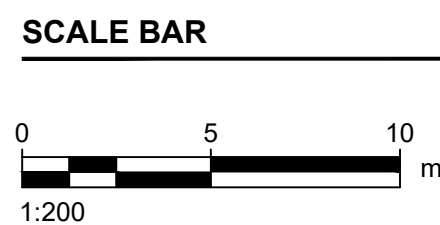


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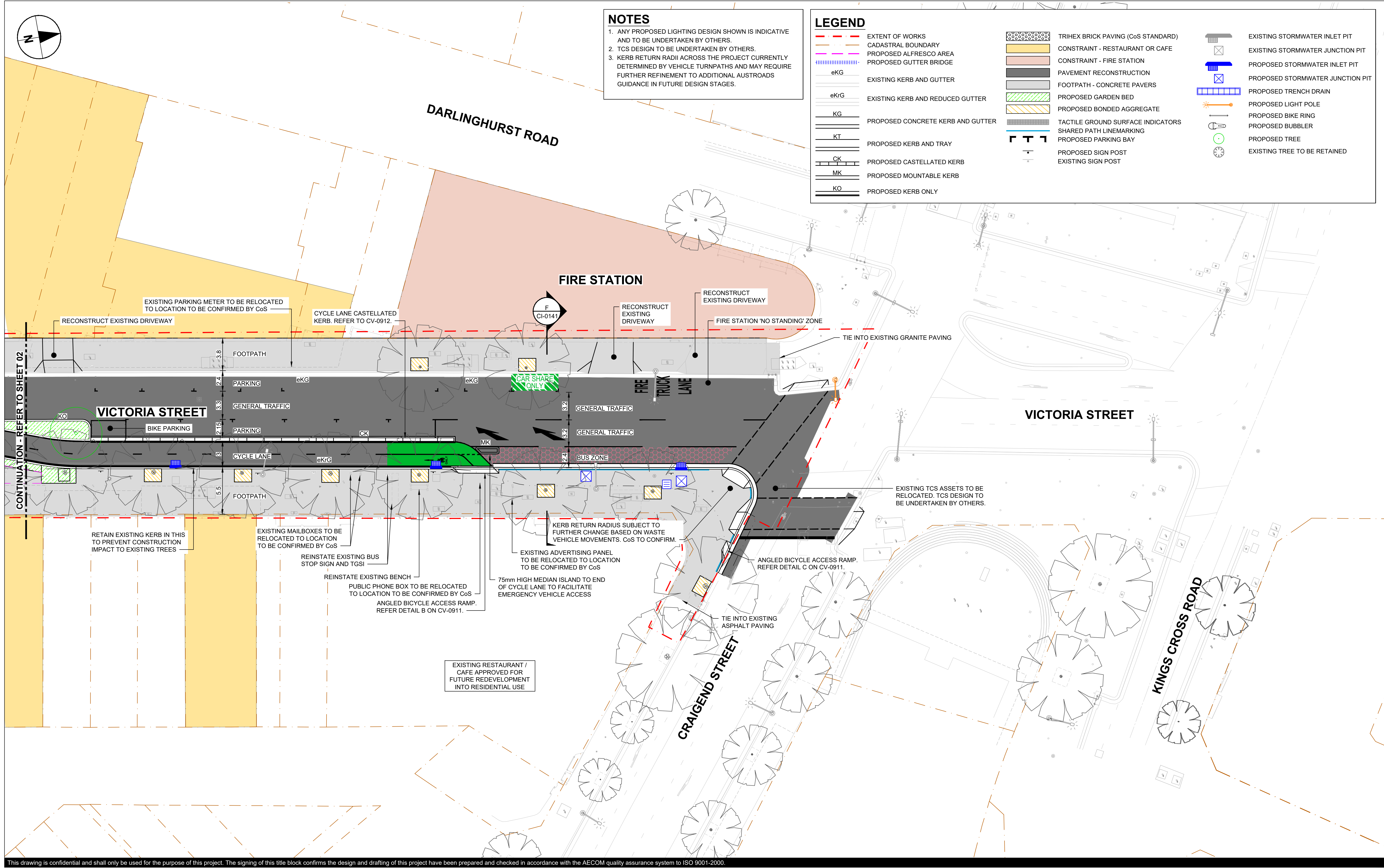
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ISSUE/REVISION		
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I/R	DATE	DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER
60750589
SHEET TITLE
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
SHEET 02

SHEET NUMBER
60750589-004-SHT-1000-CV-0102

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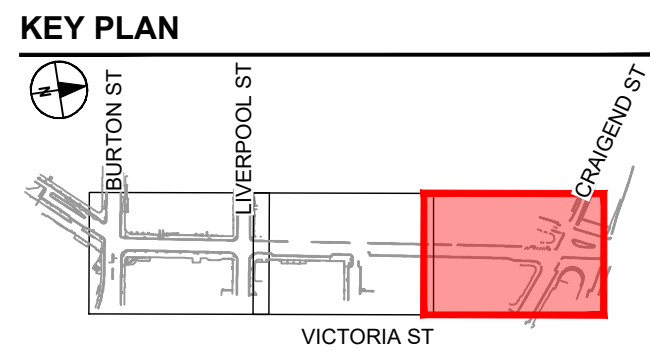
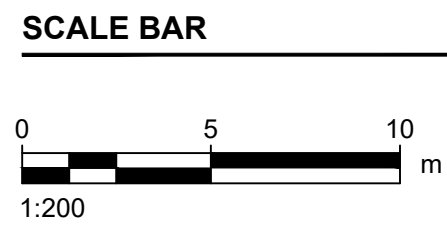
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PROJECT
Victoria Street

CLIENT

CITY OF SYDNEY



REGISTRATION

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DESIGNER	CHECKED	APPROVED
PROJECT DATA		
DATUM	SURVEY	

ISSUE/REVISION		
01	07.11.2025	50% DETAILED DESIGN
I/R	DATE	DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER
60750589

SHEET TITLE
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
SHEET 03

SHEET NUMBER
60750589-004-SHT-1000-CV-0103

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Attachment B

Engagement Report

Improving Victoria Street, Darlinghurst

2025



Engagement report

From 8 September to 20 October 2025, we asked the community for feedback on our proposal to upgrade Victoria Street to be safer and more enjoyable for people walking and riding, make the area greener and support local businesses by providing permanent outdoor dining space. To do this, we're proposing to reduce the existing 2 traffic lanes to one lane. The project includes features to calm traffic and improve walking and riding, including:

- upgrading the existing asphalt footpath to concrete pavers
- a new two-way separated cycleway on the eastern side of Victoria Street
- footpath widening, kerb upgrades and pedestrian ramp upgrades to improve accessibility
- creating permanent space for outdoor dining
- upgrading the existing crossing at Surrey Street to a raised pedestrian crossing
- new garden beds along the street and new furniture, including a bubbler, bike parking and seating
- planting around 10 new trees, which will increase the tree canopy by around 25% to help cool and green the street.

We also plan to place overhead electrical cables underground and install new smartpoles with LED streetlights. This will require changes to utility connections to buildings.

The design has no parking loss, but this may change as the design progresses. We'll aim for net zero loss and minimise any possible parking reduction.



Purpose of the engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- notify stakeholders of the proposal.
- gather feedback from stakeholders and the community.

Submissions received during consultation.

We received a total of 219 responses via an online survey, interactive map, phone calls and emailed submissions.

- 17 survey submissions – all submissions were supportive of the proposal
- 164 comments from 75 stakeholders using the interactive map
- 69 email submissions

The Sydney Your Say page was visited 1,869 times during the consultation period.



Key findings

Design feedback and suggestions	City of Sydney response
Support for the cycleway	The inclusion of the cycleway aligns with the City's Cycling Strategy and Action Plan.
Support of widening footpaths, adding greenery and outdoor dining	The proposed public domain upgrade aligns with the City's 'A City for Walking' Strategy and Action Plan.
Concerns about potential issues with shared paths	Shared paths are required at either end of the cycleway to allow users to safely rejoin the footpath. The footpaths in these locations are 5.5 and 6m wide and can easily accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.
Concerns about impact on emergency vehicles	Emergency services have been consulted on the project and are supportive of the proposal to reduce trafficable lanes from 2 to 1. In case of an emergency, and the road is blocked, an alternate access has been provided via the cycleway.
Concerns about traffic congestion	Traffic modelling has been undertaken and has demonstrated that the level of service for traffic has not been significantly reduced.
Loss of loading zones and potential business impacts	Loading zone locations will be determined during the detailed design phase. This will be done in consultation with businesses to ensure adequate access.
Retain and improve access for loading and waste collection	As above.
Provide more on street bike parking and bike racks	On street bike parking and additional bike racks will be provided.
The cycleway needs to connect to other cycleways	Victoria St is identified as part of the local bike network in the City's Cycling Strategy & Action Plan. Future works will connect this section to the north and south.
Plant native trees – avoid London Plane trees	The proposed trees for Victoria St are as per the City's Street Tree Master Plan. These are the Simon Poplar, Callery Pear and Tulip Tree.
Increase outdoor dining and green spaces by reducing parking spaces	The project aims for no net loss of parking, whilst at the same time increasing outdoor dining and greening.

Design feedback and suggestions	City of Sydney response
Concern about the removal of slip lane on Craigend Street	The removal of the slip lane improves pedestrian safety and amenity. A dedicated left hand turn lane is proposed for turning from Craigend into Victoria Street.
Concerns about existing street furniture including bins and QMS signs	Where possible, street furniture will be consolidated to ensure clear paths of travel.
Concerns about the bus stops and the interaction between people walking and riding	The bus stop at Craigend has an adjacent 5.5m wide footpath. The bus stop south of Liverpool St is an in lane stop.
Concerns about parking arrangement on Surrey Street	The angled parking proposed on Surrey St has been reviewed and removed from the project.

Engagement activities

Overview of engagement

1. Sydney Your Say webpage

A Sydney Your Say webpage, <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/proposed-works-maintenance/your-say-improvements-victoria-street-darlinghurst> was created. The page included information about the consultation.

2. Interactive map & survey

Community were invited to have their say by dropping pins on an interactive map and completing a survey. A link to the map was provided on the Sydney Your Say website.

3. Sydney Your Say notifications

An EDM was sent to subscribers of the Sydney Your Say Newsletter on 15 September to 4,940 recipients.

4. On site information sessions

City staff met held information sessions on the corner of Victoria and Surrey streets on Wednesday 17 and Saturday 20 September.

5. Key stakeholder meetings

Prior to public community engagement, the project team met representatives from NSW Fire, NSW Ambulance, NSW Police and St Vincent's Hospital.

The project team presented at the Local Emergency Management Committee in November 2025.

Sydney Your Say page

CITY OF SYDNEY

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Have your say on improvements to Victoria Street, Darlinghurst

We're planning to upgrade Victoria Street, Darlinghurst between Crossgait and Sturges streets.

[Find out more](#)

Under review

Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. This project team will report back on key outcomes.

Review dates:
8 September 2020 to 20 October 2020

Why we're doing this

We're progressing to upgrade Victoria Street to be safer and more enjoyable for people walking and cycling, make the area greener and support local businesses by providing permanent outdoor dining space. To do this, we're progressing to reduce the existing 7 traffic lanes to four lane.

Craig Ryan
Project Coordinator - Streetscape
cryan@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
02 9239 9320

craigryan@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

What we're doing

Our plans include:

- upgrading the existing asphalt footpath to concrete paths
- new one-way separated cyclingway on the western side of Victoria Street
- footpath widening, with sidewalks and pedestrian way upgrades to improve accessibility
- creating permanent spaces for outdoor dining
- upgrading the existing crossing at Surry Street to a raised pedestrian crossing
- new garden beds along the street and near Surridge, including a bubble bike parking and seating
- planting around 10 new trees, which will increase the tree canopy by around 25% to bring our goal and green the street.

We also plan to place overhead electrical cables underground and install new surveillance with CCTV cameras. This will require changes to utility connections to buildings.

Our current design for the project has, but may change as the design progresses. We'll aim to set out new road markings as soon as possible pending funding.

Improvements to Victoria Street, Darlinghurst - concept design

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Next steps

After this consultation, we'll consider all feedback and report the results to Council for endorsement of the project.

How you can give feedback

Consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 20 October 2020.

- Have your say on our interactive map**

You'll need to log in with a City of Sydney account to complete the survey. If you don't have an account, it's easy to create one.
- Email or post your feedback**

You can get your feedback by email or transport@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or post to:

City of Sydney
Civic Engagement
GPO Box 1111
Sydney NSW 2001
- Talk to us**

You can chat with our project team at the corner of Victoria and Surridge streets on these dates:

 - Wednesday 17 September, 3.30pm to 4.30pm
 - Saturday 20 September, 10am to 1pm

Please note events are subject to weather conditions.

Other ways you can give feedback

Talk to us in person	✓
If you are Deaf or have complex communication needs	✓
If you need an interpreter	✓

Interactive map

