

Attachment B

Environmental Strategy 2025-2030 – Full Engagement Report

Exhibition report – Environmental strategy 2025-2030



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Overview

Background

Our environmental strategy 2025-2030 sets targets for our own operations and the local area to reduce our carbon footprint, improve water health and increase sustainable use of resources.

In November 2024, while revising the strategy, we asked our community about the environmental priorities that matter most to them and how we can make Sydney more sustainable and resilient. We heard that taking action to protect Sydney's environment and liveability is vital.

In April 2025 we invited feedback on the final draft of the strategy. The revised plan will

- help our communities rely less on fossil fuels and transition away from gas.
 - strengthen support for renters to adapt to climate impacts.
 - reduce our operational energy use and emissions
 - explore ways to regenerate our environment.
-

Engagement summary

The draft environmental strategy 2025 – 2035 was on public exhibition and open for feedback from 9 April to 9 May 2025.

Consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the community to review and comment on the proposed strategy before being taken to Council for adoption.

We asked the community for feedback on the priority areas and new targets proposed in our revised environmental strategy. We also asked for feedback on the actions proposed to support renters to access energy efficient and climate resilient homes.

Consultation activities included online engagement and stakeholder briefings. The consultation was promoted through email direct marketing and social media.

This report outlines the community engagement activities that took place to support the exhibition and summarises the key findings from the consultation.

Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Meet the requirements of a public exhibition and the City of Sydney's community engagement strategy.
- Explain the key aspects of the strategy in plain English.
- Seek feedback on the revised strategy, including the level of community support for priority areas and targets.

Submissions and engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
40	Total submissions received
28	Survey submissions
12	Email submissions
2602	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
230	People downloaded the draft strategy
416	Stakeholder emails were sent
386	Organisations were invited to attend a briefing or comment on the strategy
4	Community members attended an online information session
35	People attended an online information session for organisations

Submissions were received from the following organisations:

- Animal Liberation
- Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council
- Endeavour Energy
- Glebe Society Inc.
- Green Building Council of Australia
- Sydney Water
- Touchgrid
- Wattblock

Survey respondent snapshot

68% live in the City, 43% work here, 32% own property

57% are aged 35-65, 18% are 18-35, 25% are over 65

100% speak English at home

61% are female, 29% are male

70% were already aware of our environmental strategy

45% rent an apartment

38% are on a low income

25% experience mental or chronic health conditions

10% are social housing residents

10% are new residents

7% live with mobility and visual disability

Key findings

Strong support for the proposed priority areas

All 8 priority areas in the environmental strategy 2025-2030 received very strong support.
People agree that these priority areas are very important to make Sydney sustainable.

The main reasons given for supporting the priorities were the urgency of climate change, the importance of liveability and wellbeing in our city, and the value of reducing our carbon footprint and emissions. Many people expressed general support without a specific reason.

A small number of respondents felt that some of the priorities are not important. Those respondents expressed concern about being penalised for owning a combustion engine car (1 response), concern about litter and garbage collection (1 response), or asked for the strategy to include more actions that reduce pollution and increase green cover (2 responses).

Appetite for more ambitious targets

61% of survey respondents think our targets are not ambitious enough.

18% think they are about right, and 4% (1 respondent) think they are too ambitious.

People told us that more action is needed by all levels of government to address the climate crisis. They expressed concern about emissions and about biodiversity protection and enhancement. They asked for more action through rules for new developments. One response asked for more collaborative community co-design in the approach to action.

Many respondents expressed support for the targets, including people who said they were 'about right' and people who asked for more ambition.

People who think the targets are about right praised them for being realistic, achievable, and specific where they need to be. The respondent who said the targets are too ambitious is concerned about the cost.

Support for renter focused action

82% of survey respondents think that supporting renters to make their homes more comfortable in extreme weather is very or somewhat important.

40% think the measures proposed to support renters will be effective, or somewhat effective. 20% think they will not be effective, and 40% of respondents skipped the question.

People who agreed the proposed measures will be effective also expressed concern about the cost for landlords and the need for state and federal governments to directly support renters. People who said the measures will be somewhat effective similarly commented on the importance of support from state and federal government and expressed concern that delivering the measures may be difficult and expensive.

People who think the measures will not be effective said state government action is crucial, expressed concern about the cost, and asked for more details.

Industry feedback

Several organisations provided detailed, constructive feedback on the draft environmental strategy 2025–2030. Submissions were broadly supportive, with some recommendations offered to further strengthen the strategy’s impact, equity and deliverability.

Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) welcomed the strategy’s ambition and alignment with best practice in the built environment. They strongly supported the focus on decarbonising buildings, inclusion of renters and social housing residents in retrofit programs, and integration of circular economy and biodiversity priorities. GBCA recommended further alignment with their *Green Star* framework and offered briefings on circular procurement and nature-based design.

Animal Liberation highlighted a disconnect between the strategy’s environmental goals and the City’s continued use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs). They argued this undermines broader City objectives around biodiversity, ethical procurement, and environmental health. They recommend banning SGARs, adopting integrated pest management, and introducing a public pesticide register.

Sydney Water expressed strong support for the strategy’s focus on water resilience, efficiency, and waterway health. They encouraged more ambitious water targets, particularly for residential consumption, and highlighted opportunities for collaboration to support implementation. They also recommended integrating land use planning controls to improve stormwater outcomes.

ASBEC (Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council) commended the City for its leadership and clear commitment to a zero-carbon, regenerative future. They support the move away from gas, investment in renter resilience, and the broader ambition to move from sustainability toward environmental regeneration. ASBEC emphasised the need for multi-sector collaboration and reaffirmed its support for implementation.

Endeavour Energy expressed strong support for the strategy’s comprehensive and thoughtful direction. They suggested expanding the focus from building efficiency to broader community efficiency and resilience, including opportunities for energy sharing, community solar, battery storage, smart grids, and incentives for local renewable energy uptake. They also recommended public education and cross-sector partnerships to support implementation.

Wattblock offered to support implementation of the strategy by sharing insights from its work with over 500 apartment buildings on decarbonisation. They highlight the potential to engage strata communities in emissions reduction efforts.

Touchgrid provided information about their platform, which aims to visualise and coordinate climate action across stakeholders. They expressed interest in supporting the City’s transition planning through improved access to localised climate data.

Survey responses

Feedback on the strategy's priorities

We asked survey respondents how important the proposed priority areas are to make Sydney a sustainable city. The results show clear support, especially for the uptake of renewable electricity and the regeneration of waterways and land.

Support for each priority is detailed below in figure 1. The numbers on the graphs show how many survey respondents selected each option. The percentages reflect the proportion of those respondents who rated the priority as either 'very important', 'somewhat important', or 'not important'.

Figure 1. Responses to the survey question “In your opinion, how important are the following proposed priority areas to making Sydney a sustainable city?”

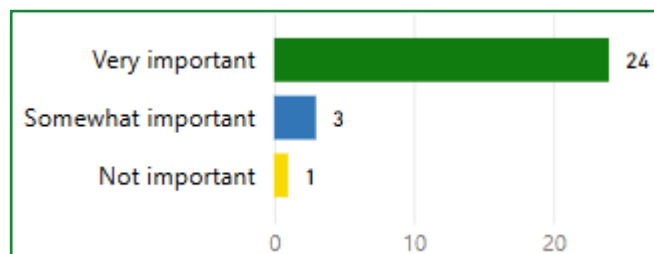
1. Driving electrification

Drive electrification of all buildings and reduce reliance on fossil gas.

96%

Very or somewhat important

4% not important



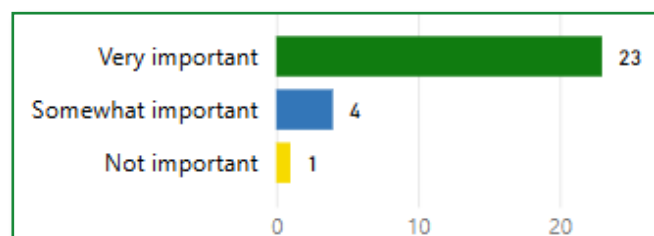
2. Support to reduce carbon emissions

Support the community to reduce carbon emissions arising from the creation of materials.

96%

Very or somewhat important

4% not important



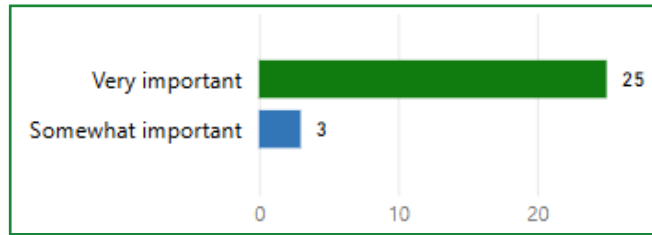
3. Uptake of renewable electricity

Encourage community uptake of renewable electricity including on-site solar.

100%

Very or somewhat important

0% not important



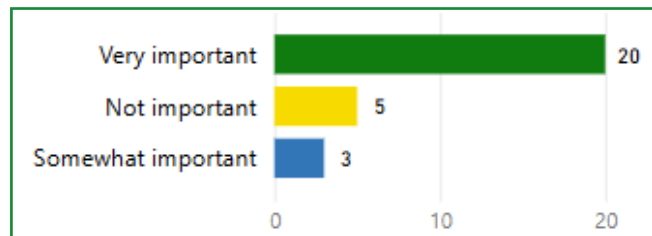
4. Support for renters

Support renters to make their homes more comfortable in extreme weather.

82%

Very or somewhat important

18% not important



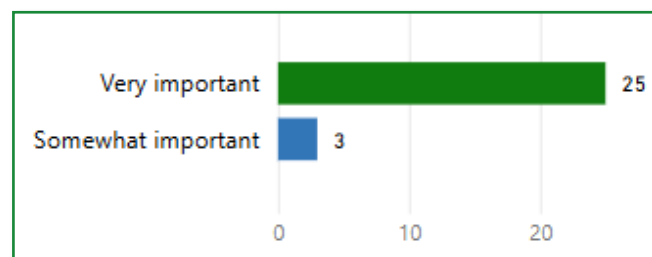
5. Regenerate waterways and land

Enhance and regenerate waterways and land and prevent pollution.

100%

Very or somewhat important

0% not important



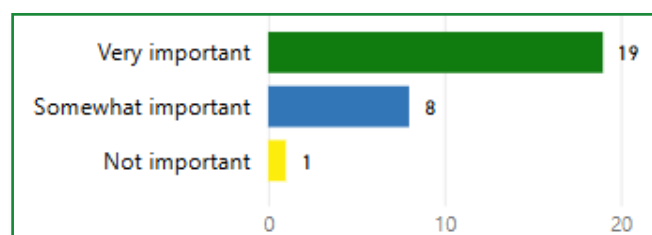
6. Water resilience

Build water resilience through encouraging water efficiency in homes and businesses.

96%

Very or somewhat important

4% not important



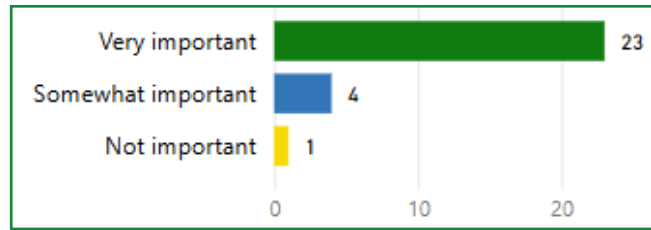
7. Access to zero emissions transport

Work towards access to zero emissions transport for everyone e.g., electric buses, the ability to walk or cycle.

96%

Very or somewhat important

4% not important



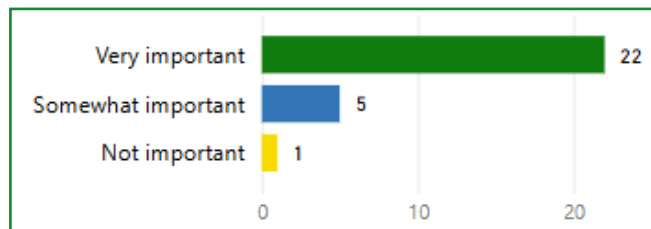
8. Access to zero emissions transport

Provide access for everyone in the community to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle instead of buying new.

96%

Very or somewhat important

4% not important



Summary of comments on the priority areas

After they rated each priority, survey respondents were asked to give a reason for their level of support with the open comment question “Tell us why you think these priorities are important.”

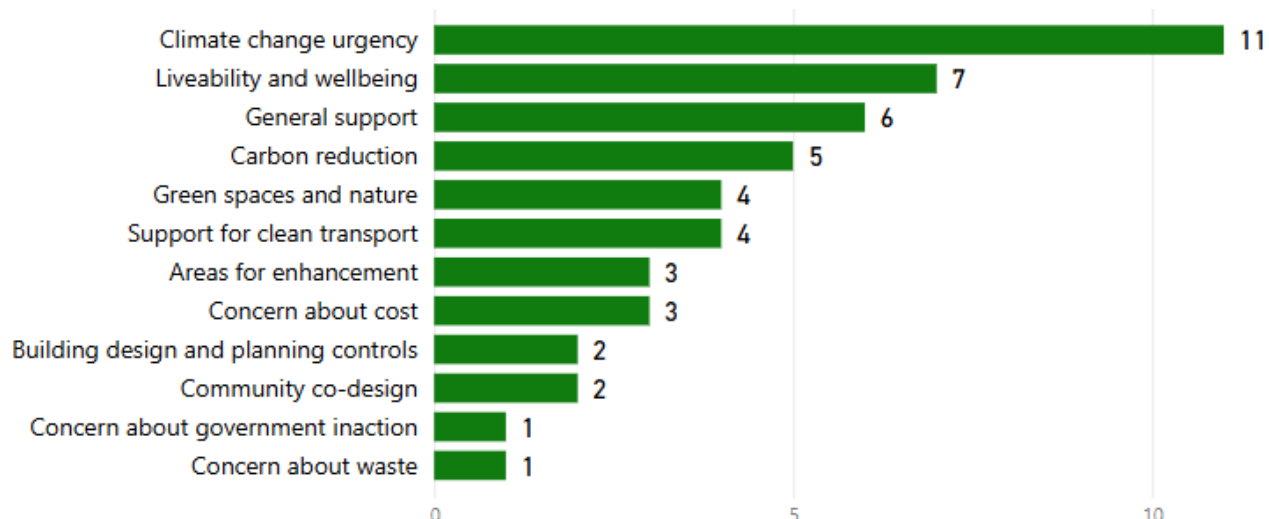
The topics most mentioned in these comments were the urgency of climate change, the importance of liveability and wellbeing, and the importance of carbon reduction. People also talked about the importance of green spaces and nature and expressed support for zero emissions transport. A summary of the topics mentioned is shown in figure 2.

“We need urgent action to reduce the effects of climate change and prepare communities to support each other through climate driven social and economic issues.”

“These priorities are vital for the City of Sydney as they improve our climate resilience, liveability, economic growth, social equity, and biodiversity. By focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing green spaces, and fostering inclusive communities, we will be a healthier, more resilient, and economically vibrant city.”

“I think working towards zero emission transport should be a priority for the City of Sydney. It is the area where the council can have the greatest influence and would also be able to deliver the greatest benefits. The ability to use zero emission transport / walk / cycle everywhere in our city will have benefits well beyond just the environmental gains. It will make Sydney a better city all around.”

Figure 2. Reasons for level of support



Feedback on the targets

The strategy proposes new targets to reduce our environmental impact, improve water health and increase sustainable use of resources. Survey respondents were asked to give an overall rating for the targets and then tell us why they gave that rating.

Of the total survey respondents (28 people), 61% think our targets are not ambitious enough, 18% think they are about right, 4% think they are too ambitious, and 17% skipped the question.

People told us they have an appetite for bolder action. Their comments reflected a deep concern about the impact of climate change and the urgent need to act to address it.

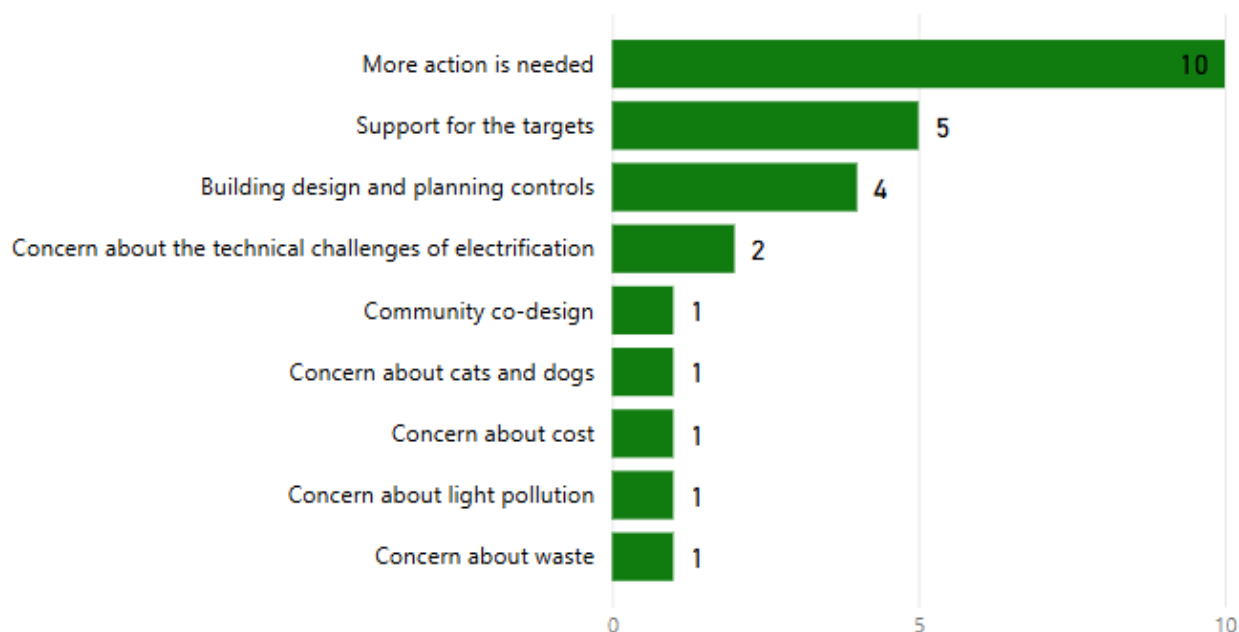
The most mentioned topics were a desire for more action, general support for the targets, and requests for more action through building design and planning regulations. A summary of the topics mentioned is shown in figure 3.

“The City of Sydney has made impressive progress on many of its priority areas, particularly operational emissions. However, we must do better to avoid warming above 2 degrees and alarming biodiversity loss...”

“I think it’s a good balance of ambitious and realistic and this will help to hopefully increase the likelihood of being able to achieve all the goals listed.”

“I don’t think we are doing enough when it comes to new developments, there needs to be a drastic change to DA rules to ensure targets can be met.”

Figure 3. Reasons for opinions on the targets



Feedback on measures to support renters

The strategy will support renters to access energy efficient and climate resilient homes. It promises to advocate for minimum rental standards and financial incentives for landlords, work towards equitable electrification of buildings, and promote state and federal programs that help renters access renewable energy and energy efficient technologies.

We asked survey respondents to tell us if they think these measures will be effective and to comment on their reasons.

40%

Said yes or somewhat effective

20% said no, 40% skipped the question



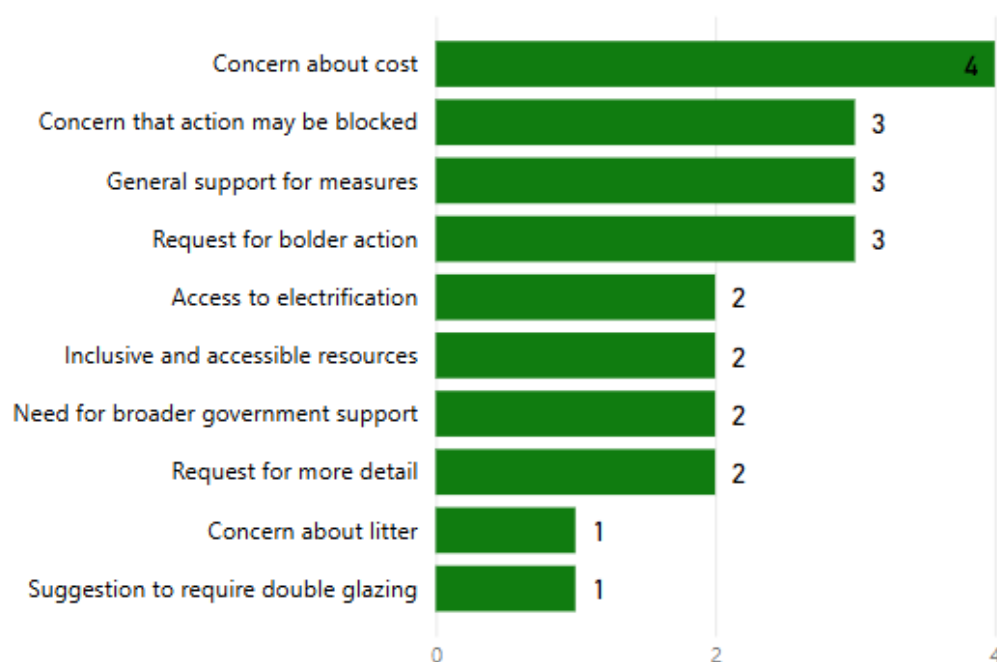
Of the respondents who told us they rent an apartment, **42%** think the measures will be effective or somewhat effective, 17% think they will not be effective, and 41% skipped the question.

People told us they are concerned about the cost of the measures and concerned that action on the measures will be blocked or too difficult to deliver. A summary of reasons is shown in figure 4.

“If you make it harder/more costly for landlords to provide rentals then we will loose (sic) rental houses, making it harder to rent.”

“These are fantastic aims, but considerable roadblocks still exist, particularly in strata buildings. There needs to be considerable incentive for strata committees to support these initiatives.”

Figure 4. Reasons for opinions on the effectiveness of measures to support renters to access energy efficient and climate resilient homes



Other comments

We asked survey respondents if there was anything else they would like to tell us about the Environmental Strategy 2025 – 2030. The table below summarises the topics raised in these comments.

Comment topic	No. of mentions
Concern about cost	2
General support	2
Concern about achievability	1
Concern about dogs off leash	1
Concern about equity in EV policies	1
Concern about light pollution	1
Concern about missing biodiversity and canopy	1
Concern about outsourced waste management	1
No further comments	1
Request for measures targeting impact reduction of severe weather events	1
Request for safer walking conditions	1
Request for soft plastics recycling	1
Request for support upgrading existing homes	1
Request for the strategy to be co-designed with community	1
Request to enable more community initiatives	1
Request to include food and composting	1
Suggestion to engage with local businesses to reduce pollution.	1

Summary of community feedback by email

The Glebe Society provided a detailed submission calling for stronger environmental performance in urban ecology. Key suggestions included:

- Measuring and reporting urban green space and accessibility per capita, using WHO guidelines.
- Bringing forward green cover and tree canopy targets to 2040, with more native species diversity and removal of allergenic and invasive trees.
- Improving green space quality through understory planting in parks and streetscapes.
- Mapping and enhancing wildlife corridors to strengthen biodiversity connectivity across dense urban areas.

Their feedback supports the strategy's regenerative goals and proposes measurable improvements aligned with public health, climate resilience and biodiversity outcomes.

Four individual community members submitted feedback by email. They expressed strong support for the strategy's goals and offered a range of practical suggestions to enhance implementation. These included creating "cool down areas" in public spaces to support renters and vulnerable residents during extreme heat, supporting local repair businesses to advance circular economy aims, and improving pedestrian safety by advocating stronger regulation of e-bike behaviour. One person proposed the formation of "heat teams" to check on elderly people during heatwaves, while another asked for more information about how the environmental strategy aligns with broader City plans. Concerns were raised about cleanliness and waste management in parts of the CBD, particularly alleyways, with a suggestion for targeted high-pressure cleaning and better maintenance to protect public amenity.

Summary of feedback from the online information sessions

We held 2 online information sessions, one open to all community members (4 attendees) and one for people representing businesses and organisations (35 attendees).

At the community session we presented the details of the strategy's 4 directions and asked attendees to rate the importance of each one from a choice of 'not important', 'somewhat important', 'very important' and 'not sure'. The attendees who participated in the polls (3 people) **unanimously rated all 4 directions as 'very important'**.

At the organisation session we presented the details of the strategy's 4 directions. We asked about strategic alignment and what we should prioritise to deliver the strategy effectively. The responses to these polls are detailed in appendix D.

Engagement activities

Overview of engagement activities

Sydney Your Say webpage

A [Sydney Your Say webpage](#) was created. The page included an electronic copy of the draft environmental strategy 2025-2030, an online survey and other key information about the consultation.

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 April e-newsletter (5059 subscribers).

Notification email

An email was sent to key stakeholders, including people who gave feedback during the early-stage consultation, community groups and organisations known to have an interest in the environmental strategy, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal.

Community information session

An online community information session was held on Wednesday 16 April and was attended by 4 community members. The information session was promoted on the Sydney Your Say page.

Organisation information session

An online information session was held on Wednesday 30 April for businesses and organisations and was attended by 35 people. The information session was promoted through a stakeholder email to 386 organisations.

Marketing and communications

The following marketing and communications activities promoted awareness of the consultation and reached a range of audience segments through paid advertising and existing City of Sydney channels.

- Facebook advertising
- Linked In post – boosted organic post
- Instagram organic post – reel
- City of Sydney email marketing (CoS News, First Nations, Sustainable apartments)

Appendix

Appendix A Sydney Your Say and email marketing tiles



Photo: Will Jones / City of Sydney

Our new environmental strategy

In 2024 we asked our communities about the environmental priorities that matter most to them and how we can make Sydney more sustainable and resilient.

We now invite your feedback on the final draft of the strategy. Have your say by Friday 9 May.

[Read more](#)



Have your say – new environmental strategy

We're revising our environmental strategy which outlines our plans for a sustainable Sydney over the next 5 years.

Our revised plan will:

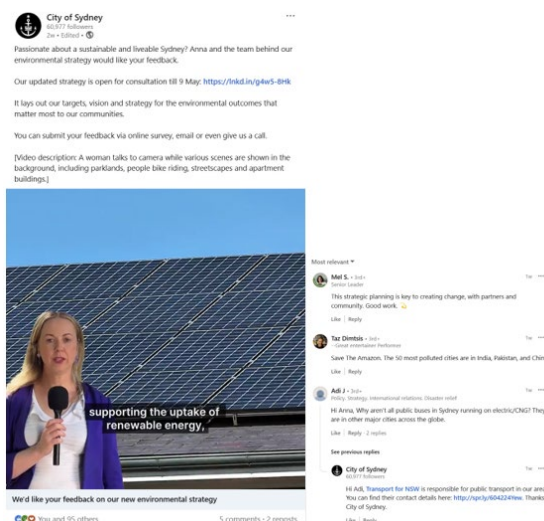
- help our communities rely less on fossil fuels and transition away from gas
- strengthen support for renters to adapt to climate impacts
- reduce our operational energy use and emissions
- explore ways to regenerate our environment.

We welcome your feedback on our final draft of the strategy. [Take a look now.](#)

Appendix B Facebook advertising

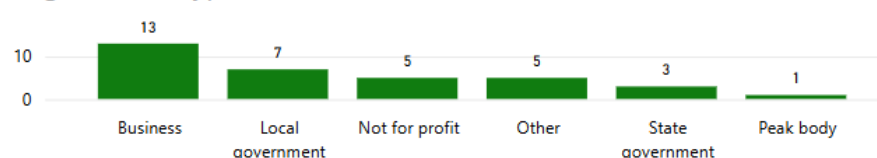


Appendix C Linked In boosted organic post



Appendix D poll results from the online briefing for organisations 30 April

Organisation type



Which of these strategic priorities align with priorities you are working towards in your own organisation?

Practise sustainable procurement to reduce supply chain emissions and create circular economy opportunities	19
Deliver environmental sustainability through responsible asset planning and management	18
Reduce direct operational emissions and energy use by electrifying our buildings and fleet	17
Build water resilience in our operations with increased efficiency and non-potable water use	10
Total	64

What should we prioritise to deliver this strategy effectively?

Drive electrification of all buildings and reduce reliance on fossil gas	23
Support renters' access to energy efficient and climate resilient homes	21
Encourage community uptake of renewable electricity including onsite solar	13
Build water resilience through encouraging water efficiency in homes and businesses	9
Support communities to reduce embodied carbon	8
Total	30

What issues presented in the strategy do you think our sustainability programs should prioritise.

Electrification of existing buildings in all sectors	16
Circular materials - reduce, reuse, repair	13
Accelerating progress to net zero	11
Embodied carbon in fit-outs	8
Emergency response planning for resilient buildings	8
Engaging B and C grade commercial office on sustainability	7
Water performance in residential and accommodation	6
Renewable energy power purchase agreements	5
Other? (Please comment below)	2
Total	24





Environmental Strategy focus groups

Engagement Report

Client: City of Sydney

Date: May 2025

Report title: Environmental Strategy focus groups engagement report

Client: City of Sydney

Version: 5

Date: May 2025



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Cred Consulting acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we operate.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Ancestors and Elders past and present.

We recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of First Nations Peoples, and the eternal and spiritual connection held in the lands, skies and waters, through cultural practices and beliefs.

Our team is proud to live, learn and thrive in the place we now call Australia, and recognise sovereignty has never been ceded by First Nations Peoples of this continent.

As embedded in our values, we are committed to building connected, healthy and resilient communities and creating purposeful outcomes that reflect our deep appreciation for the peoples and cultures that make us who we are and shape where we are going — together as one.

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 - 6.1 What we heard 23

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of Sydney (the City) is revising its environmental strategy. The City is committed to reducing the environmental impact of their operations, buildings, people and transport on the local area and this document outlines the City's plans for a sustainable Sydney over the next 5 years.

The current 2021 – 2025 Environmental Strategy focuses on reducing emissions and energy use, using alternative water sources, supporting the growth of the circular economy and introducing better performance standards for buildings. The strategy also looked at how the City can mitigate the impacts of climate change and protect biodiversity, green spaces and waterways. This strategy is now approaching the end of its lifecycle and work is underway to revise the strategy and develop the next iteration through to 2030.

The City of Sydney, as part of the development of the next Environmental strategy 2025 – 2030, wants to consult with the community, particularly climate vulnerable groups, to better understand what they think the new environmental strategy should cover and the support they need to contribute to a Sydney that is more sustainable and resilient.

1.2 Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to engage with climate vulnerable groups to better understand community perception of what an environmental strategy should deliver and what support people need to contribute to the achievement of sustainability targets.

This was achieved through a series of focus groups that explored community priorities, community experiences with climate impacts, what people do in their day-to-day life to be more sustainable, and how the City of Sydney can better support them to do that.

Learnings from community engagement will be combined with learnings from data from research projects to identify priorities for the revised strategy

1.3 Engagement program

The engagement program consisted of a series of four focus groups with targeted community cohorts who could be considered more vulnerable to climate impacts:

- People with a household income between \$50,000 and \$90,000 (considered low income for the LGA)
- People who rent apartments
- Mandarin speakers, and
- People with disability.

This report provides a summary of findings from all focus groups listed above. Findings in this report have been summarised by focus group cohort.

1.4 Recruitment to the focus groups

The focus groups were recruited in several ways. Two focus groups (people who rent apartments and people with a household income between \$50,000 and \$90,000) were independently recruited by Taverner Research and the focus group with Mandarin speakers was independently recruited by Multicultural Marketing and Management, a specialist multicultural market research agency.

The purpose of the independent recruitment approach for these focus groups was to ensure a demographically representative group of the community were in attendance. Community members expressed their interest in participating in the focus groups and were screened according to their demographic characteristics.

The selection process was designed to ensure each group of participants aligned with the specific cohort, reflected the City of Sydney local area and were a diverse mix of the community. A range of demographic factors were considered, including suburb, age, gender, housing tenure, dwelling type, language spoken at home and ability. The focus was on ensuring a broad mix of representation.

The focus group with people with disability was recruited by the City of Sydney, via an email invitation to their networks inviting people to register to participate.

1.5 About the focus groups

Focus group 1: People with a household income between \$50,000 and \$90,0000

This focus group was facilitated by Cred Consulting over Zoom from 5.30-7.30pm on Tuesday 10 December 2024. 12 community members attended the focus group.

Participants were independently recruited by Taverner Research to ensure community members within this income bracket were represented.

Focus group 2: People who rent apartments

This focus group was facilitated by Cred Consulting over Zoom from 5.30-7.30pm on Thursday 12 December 2024. 10 community members attended the focus group.

Participants were independently recruited by Taverner Research to ensure people who rent apartments in the City of Sydney were represented.

Focus group 3: Mandarin speakers

This focus group was facilitated by Multicultural Marketing and Management, a specialist multicultural market research agency from 6-8pm on Wednesday 11 December 2024. 12 community members were represented.

Participants were independently recruited by Multicultural Marketing and Management to ensure people who spoke Mandarin were represented.

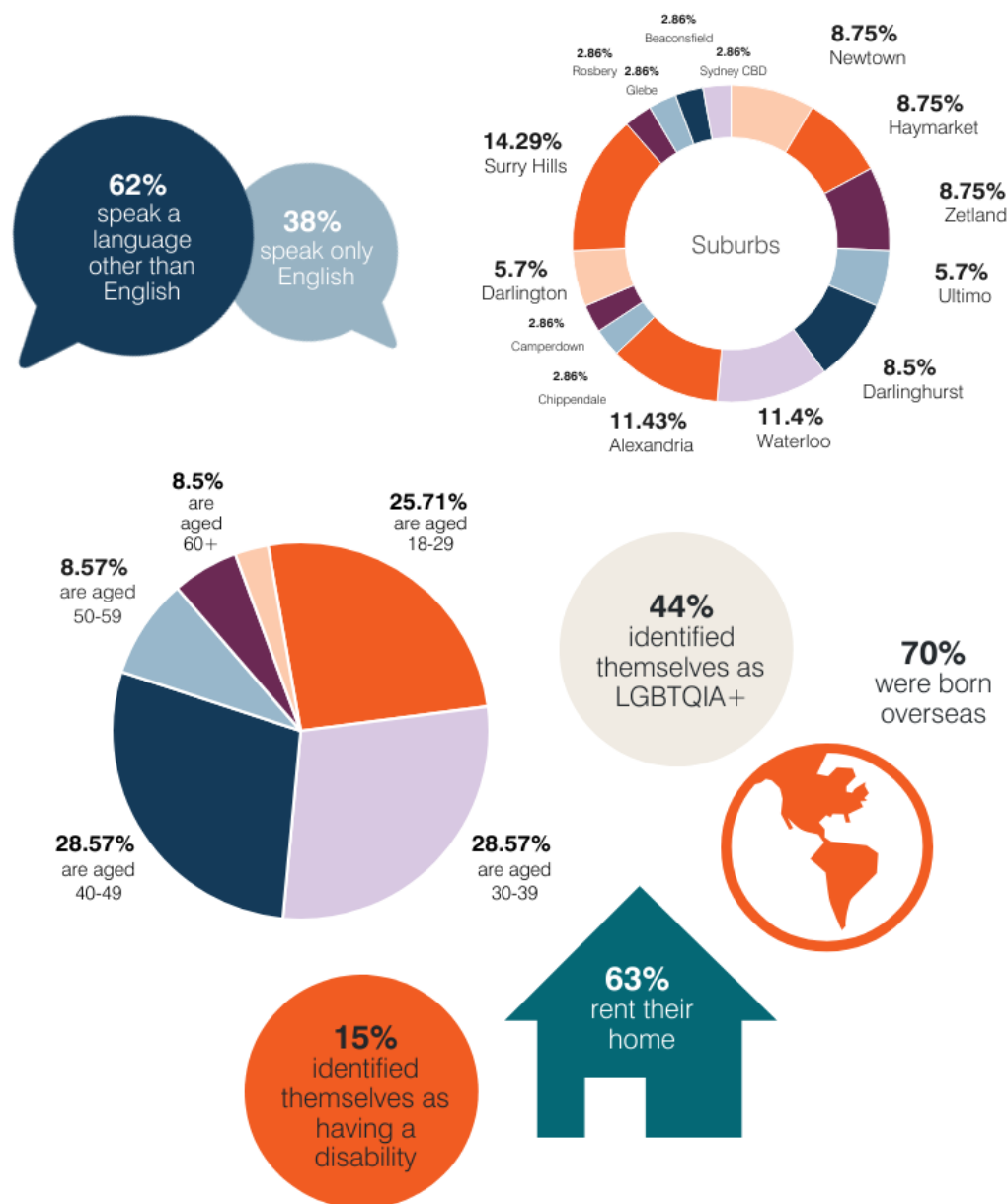
Focus group 4: People with disability

This focus group was facilitated by Cred Consulting over Zoom from 5.30-7.30pm on Tuesday 29 April 2025. 4 community members attended the focus group.

1.6 Participant profile

A total of 38 participants attended all four focus groups. All participants were residents of the City of Sydney local area. Figure 1 provides a demographic snapshot of the participants who attended focus groups one, two and three. Demographic details were not captured for participants who attended focus group four.

Figure 1 – Demographic snapshot of participants from focus groups one, two and three



2. Overall key findings

Across all focus groups, participants expressed a desire for a more environmentally sustainable and inclusive city, and some practical and accessible ways that they can be more sustainable in their own lives. Focus group participants also identified a range of barriers that make it hard for them to live sustainably and respond effectively to climate-related impacts

There is a need to improve waste management systems

Participants across all focus groups indicated that there is a need for Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) bins to encourage composting, more accessible recycling options for e-waste and soft plastic through Return and Earn stations and recycling centers in and around the LGA. Participants also called for better education and clearer guidance, specifically for those living in apartment buildings, where confusion about sorting waste remains a barrier to living sustainably.

Accessible and affordable public and active transport options are critical

The need for more accessible, affordable and reliable public transport options (such as trains and buses) was raised consistently. Participants highlighted the need for the LGA to be accessible to people with disability so they can move around and participate in society independently. Participants encouraged the City of Sydney to improve public and active transport infrastructure, maintain footpaths more effectively and ensure better connectivity with public transport routes and services. Supporting the use of electric vehicles through providing charging stations in apartment buildings and on the street was also considered a key opportunity to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and the City's carbon footprint.

Homes need to be designed well to respond to climate impacts

Many participants reported living in buildings with poor insulation, inadequate heating or cooling and limited ventilation, among other issues. These conditions are exacerbated with the effects of heatwaves, humidity, storms and flooding. Participants noted that much of the current housing stock is quite old (particularly in rental properties), and they advocated for greater efforts from the City and landlords to support retrofitting of older buildings with energy-efficient features such as solar panels, double glazed windows, air conditioning units and natural ventilation. Many participants, particularly those living in rental apartments, also identified their lack of decision-making power to amend their living environments to withstand climate related impacts

Cost of living pressures are a key barrier to sustainable living

Many focus group participants noted that cost of living pressure was the key barrier to not being able to live sustainably or take action in their day-to-day lives. For example, participants reported that the costs associated with energy-efficient appliances and building upgrades make it difficult to improve their own situation.

There is value in providing more green infrastructure

Participants emphasised the importance of increasing green infrastructure to mitigate urban heat, enhance liveability and wellbeing and improve biodiversity. Participants suggested incorporating more green infrastructure like native street trees, community gardens, and soft landscaping throughout the LGA.

There is a need to improve communication and awareness about environmental sustainability initiatives

While participants were generally supportive of the City's environmental sustainability initiatives, many reported a lack of awareness or difficulty accessing certain sustainability initiatives and programs. In particular, they highlighted programs and initiatives being skewed toward homeowners rather than renters, significant language and communication barriers for non-English speakers and difficulty accessing recycling centers. Participants expressed a desire for simple, multilingual information and education initiatives that will help empower residents to take action and improve environmental sustainability.

3. People with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$90,000

3.1 What we heard

Feedback on priorities

The City of Sydney has identified four key priorities to help achieve their vision of a sustainable and resilient Sydney. These priorities are:

- Resilient and efficient operations: Ensuring our work and suppliers reduce energy, water and waste in our buildings, pools, parks and other facilities.
- Efficient and climate resilient buildings: Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels by supporting electrification to cut emissions, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources and helping people make their homes more climate resilient.
- Regenerative and inclusive city: Regenerating the waterways and land. Ensuring everyone can access zero carbon transport and has the ability to reuse and repair instead of buying new.
- Strong foundations: Communicate our progress and use data to drive informed decision making.

The priorities were presented to participants, and they were asked to share their feedback and identify any other priorities that they feel are important to achieve the vision of a sustainable Sydney. Feedback provided by participants is summarised below:

Waste management

Participants expressed a desire for more bins to allow adequate waste sorting. They want to see a faster rollout of green bins/FOGO bins for food waste, more frequent sorting of chemical waste and opportunities to recycle plastic.

Trees and greenery

Participants raised the need for more green space, native plants for streetscapes, and trees to provide shade and cool the environment. They also spoke about nesting boxes, native bee boxes and soft surfaces instead of hard pavements. Participants indicated that more soft surfaces would result in better drainage.

Public and active transport

Participants want to see more affordable public transport, bike lanes incorporated into the road instead of footpaths and more car parking and solar chargers for electric vehicles.

Energy efficiency

Participants expressed a desire for more consideration of energy efficiency. They suggested installing solar panels on Sydney Town Hall and City of Sydney buildings and they spoke about doing an

efficiency review of apartment buildings. Key issues that were raised included poor insulation of homes, lack of natural ventilation and how to make homes cooler without needing air conditioning.

Experience of climate-related impacts

Participants were asked what climate-related impacts they have experienced and how they were affected.

Participants primarily spoke about the impacts from erratic/unstable weather like heavy rain and storms. They mentioned humidity, mould, rising damp and flooding as key issues, along with the increased electricity bills associated with managing impacts. Participants also spoke about leaking roofs, flooding due to blocked or old drains and potholes or obstructions on the road as a result of heavy rain.

Participants noted that there is a need for double glazed windows and building heights designed to accommodate sea breezes, to help reduce the impacts of humidity.

Barriers to responding to climate impacts

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to respond to climate impacts. Feedback provided by participants is summarised below:

Cost

Participants stated that cost is a major barrier to responding to climate impacts, particularly given the cost of living crisis and for those who live alone. Electricity bills are becoming more expensive and the cost associated with modernising buildings or making changes to respond to climate impacts results in more expensive strata fees, which are not affordable.

Challenges with strata, body corporate and landlords

Participants indicated that strata/body corporate and landlords are a key barrier. They shared experiences of strict strata bylaws, body corporate not accepting new ideas or approving changes, landlords refusing to install air conditioning or ceiling fans and strata committees not believing in climate change so being unwilling to make changes to the building. One participant mentioned that they are not permitted to use their air conditioner after 10pm and another noted that the City of Sydney rejected their strata committee request to install solar panels on the building.

Some participants stated that their landlord is not interested in making changes to the property to improve energy efficiency or climate resilience, and also refuses to let the tenant make their own changes. A participant indicated that they have no other option but to turn their oven on during winter to keep their house warm.

Participants ultimately spoke about feeling disenfranchised and unsupported by their landlord and strata committee due to the resistance they face when they make suggestions or ask for changes.

Building and infrastructure design

Participants stated that the design of buildings and the materials used are not fit for purpose when it comes to withstanding climate impacts like heavy rain. They felt that this is a common theme across the LGA, where infrastructure is outdated or poorly designed. Participants also spoke about their building not having sufficient space to install electric vehicle chargers.

Suggestions to improve sustainability

Participants shared a range of suggestions to improve sustainability and mitigate barriers. They suggested that development approval processes should be expedited for proposals that actively address climate impacts. They felt that this would be a good incentive to encourage more climate resilient buildings that can withstand climate impacts over time.

Participants also spoke about the need for high energy efficiency appliances, more native plants and less chemicals in the public domain (for example, swapping weed spray for steam or alternative options).

Participants suggested more comprehensive waste disposal options, including soft plastic recycling and allowing plastic milk bottles as part of Return and Earn. They also suggested making it easier for community groups to collect and recycle bottles as a fundraising initiative.

Participants spoke about having markets or an online council service where residents can share and swap their used goods and clothing with others.

Living sustainably – how participants do this now and what they want to do in the future

Participants were asked what they currently do in their everyday life to be more sustainable. Participants mentioned the following:

- Sorting waste, recycling and using Return and Earn
- Using the fan instead of the air conditioner
- Taking shorter showers
- Using public transport, active transport and carshare services instead of driving a personal vehicle
- Donating used goods, purchasing second hand goods and buying fewer new items
- Composting and using a food waste bin
- Avoiding single-use plastics and food waste
- Using rechargeable batteries or using solar power to charge batteries
- Carrying a reusable coffee cup and reusable grocery bags
- Buying local and Australian made items
- Sharing food with neighbours and using community gardens
- Only using washing machine on a full load and hanging washing up instead of using the dryer
- Collecting excess water in a bucket or water tank and using it to flush the toilet
- Reusing paper bags as bin liners, and
- Taking part in energy peak events to receive credits on electricity bill.

Participants who lived in apartment buildings were asked if their building has implemented any sustainability initiatives. Participants spoke about switching to LED lighting, motion sensor lighting, green waste bins, solar panels and working toward electric vehicle charging.

Participants were also asked what they would like to do in the future to be more sustainable. Participants mentioned the following changes:

- Use public transport more often
- Sort and recycle waste more effectively, including food waste and e-waste
- Have a compost bin
- Collect and reuse grey water
- Install in-ground heating
- Use 100% recyclable packaging
- Move to a fully electric lifestyle with a self-generating grid, and
- Use native plants.

Barriers to living sustainably

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably. They reiterated the same barriers raised in terms of responding to climate impacts, namely cost and challenges with strata, body corporate, landlords and the City of Sydney council. Participants also spoke about the inconvenience aspect (particularly if they are time-poor) and not knowing what they can do and where.

Participants expressed concern about the lack of Return and Earn machines in the Sydney CBD, the excessive use of plastic in supermarkets, abandoned e-scooters and bikes, limited amount of green space in the Sydney CBD and no available compost collection options.

Participants noted that there are significant barriers in terms of implementing sustainability initiatives in apartment buildings, particularly cost. They stated that there are already costly ongoing maintenance tasks in many buildings and that means sustainability initiatives are pushed aside. Participants saw value in grant funding for strata titles to enable more sustainability initiatives.

Participants suggested that the City of Sydney offer free solar powered charging points in bus stops and benches. They also expressed a desire for free community thrift stores and for all phones and small electronics to use the same charging and accessory cord.

Support needed from the City of Sydney

Participants were asked if there is anything the City of Sydney can do to support them to live in a more sustainable way. The suggestions raised by participants are summarised below:

- More comprehensive waste disposal options, including e-waste recycling, compost collection and food waste disposal in the green bin
- Free apartment efficiency review
- More Return and Earn machines
- Rebates for households that use less electricity or produce less waste
- Incentives and subsidies for buildings to make changes and become more climate resilient
- More trees, greenery and community gardens

- Tool/equipment library, where people can borrow items like tools and sewing machines rather than purchasing new
- More electric vehicle charging and parking spots
- More affordable public transport costs
- Education and outreach (particularly to younger people and harder to reach groups) to promote sustainability and the options that are available
- Reduced car speeds in the CBD and provide more pedestrian space
- Community environment champions who can promote sustainability initiatives, and
- Businesses using compostable packaging.

4. People who rent apartments

4.1 What we heard

Feedback on priorities

The City of Sydney has identified four key priorities to help achieve their vision of a sustainable and resilient Sydney. These priorities are:

- Resilient and efficient operations: Ensuring our work and suppliers reduce energy, water and waste in our buildings, pools, parks and other facilities.
- Efficient and climate resilient buildings: Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels by supporting electrification to cut emissions, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources and helping people make their homes more climate resilient.
- Regenerative and inclusive city: Regenerating the waterways and land. Ensuring everyone can access zero carbon transport and has the ability to reuse and repair instead of buying new.
- Strong foundations: Communicate our progress and use data to drive informed decision making.

The priorities were presented to participants, and they were asked to share their feedback and identify any other priorities that they feel are important to achieve the vision of a sustainable Sydney. Feedback provided by participants is summarised below:

Lack of trust with government on climate issues

Participants stressed that they have a lack of trust with all levels of government on climate issues. Participants suggested that to build this trust, they'd like to see what types of sustainable actions and changes they're undertaking to tackle environmental and climate issues. Participants suggested providing regular updates on what their goals are, what progress they're making and how does the City of Sydney compare to other local government areas.

Waste management

Similarly to other focus groups, participants expressed a desire for more bins to allow adequate waste sorting, particularly for food waste and soft plastics. Participants also raised that it's hard to dispose of furniture in a sustainable way. They also requested additional marketing material, particularly in apartment buildings, as participants raised that there is a lack of knowledge on waste sorting and what can/can't be recycled.

Accessibility issues to waste management

Participants mentioned they had a strong desire to recycle throughout this focus group, however aren't able to travel to City of Sydney recycling centers due to not owning a car or the recycling center is too far from their home.

Green space and biodiversity

Participants encouraged the City of Sydney to improve their green space and increase biodiversity through the local government area. Participants were reminded of the *Greening Sydney Strategy* and that biodiversity and green space is covered within this document.

Initiatives and programs

All participants identified that the initiatives and programs provided by the City of Sydney are great, however one participant noted that they are not always convenient to access or participate in. For example, the application process for the apartment household compost program was perceived to be complex and time-consuming, which can be a barrier for people.

Types of priorities

A participant raised a specific comment on the types of priorities – identifying that the priorities are more geared towards large infrastructure priorities and not easily accessible, community priorities.

Experience of climate-related impacts

Participants were asked about the climate-related impacts they've experienced and how these have affected them.

Many discussed environmental challenges such as rising heat and humidity, as well as cold temperatures and flash flooding. A common concern was that their apartments were either too hot or too cold, with many lacking air conditioning or heating. Several participants mentioned that as renters, landlords are reluctant to provide these amenities. Additionally, many highlighted that their homes were poorly insulated, making them uncomfortable during both summer and winter months. The age of the apartment buildings in the local area was also noted, with many being outdated and ill-equipped to handle climate-related issues.

Participants expressed concern that these problems would only worsen over time and urged the City of Sydney to encourage landlords to install proper heating, cooling, and insulation. They also recommended that the City investigate drainage systems around the city to help mitigate flash flooding.

Barriers to responding to climate impacts

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably. Similarly to other focus groups, many of the participants noted that the rising cost of living impacts hinder the adoption of climate-resilient measures.

Participants mentioned that they are unable to make any structural or design changes to their home, thus they need to spend additional money on heating, cooling to assist with ventilation. Participants raised with the rising cost of rent, and then paying for additional home materials, is a costly expense.

As noted earlier, participants also mentioned they are unable to access recycling services or Return and Earn chutes without a car.

Living sustainably – how participants do this now and what they want to do in the future

Participants were asked what they currently do in their everyday life to be more sustainable. Participants mentioned the following:

- Go op shopping – buying old, instead of new
- Advertising used products on Facebook marketplace and Gum Tree
- Walking and using public transport
- Carpooling
- Buying products in easy to recycle packaging
- Using reusable coffee cups
- Bulk shopping to reduce deliveries and packaging
- Not using soft plastics, paper towel or tissues
- Recycling as much as possible and giving things away
- Disposing of e-waste and batteries etc responsibly, and
- Having a vege gardens.

Participants also mentioned that their apartment building were undertaking the following sustainable initiatives:

- Recycling water for the gardens
- Signage for waste management
- E-water for cleaning, and
- Sensor lighting in common areas.

Barriers to living sustainably

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably. Similarly to other focus groups, many of the participants noted that the rising cost of living impacts their response to climate impacts.

These barriers raised by participants are summarised below:

- Lack of information on available programs
- Apartment layout and design e.g. doesn't include space to dry clothes, natural ventilation
- Apartment doesn't allow for sharing of facilities e.g. recycling for soft plastics
- Landlord support for structural changes in apartments, and
- Bike share scheme is no longer appealing due to dumped Lime Bikes across the city.

“Some of these problems are inevitable with climate change and there doesn't seem to be understanding around this, most people are doing all we can.”

- Focus group participant

Support needed from the City of Sydney

Participants were asked if there is anything the City of Sydney can do to support them to live in a more sustainable way. The suggestions raised by participants are summarised below:

- Improved access to existing recycling services e.g. places where you don't need to access via car
- More recycling support from the City
- No more use of single use plastic bags and only brown paper bags
- A reference sheet of local services/ resources
- Not many sustainability resources or initiatives that are for renters, only home owners e.g. solar panels
 - e.g. a participant raised that they'd like to explore splitting prices on cooling and heating appliances with their landlord.
- Ban use single use coffee cups, and
- Car share zones/pods – particularly in apartment buildings carparks.
 - e.g. a participant raised that their apartment block had a carpark only full of car share no private vehicles.

5. Mandarin speakers

5.1 What we heard

Feedback on priorities

The City of Sydney has identified four key priorities to help achieve their vision of a sustainable and resilient Sydney. These priorities are:

- Resilient and efficient operations: Ensuring our work and suppliers reduce energy, water and waste in our buildings, pools, parks and other facilities.
- Efficient and climate resilient buildings: Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels by supporting electrification to cut emissions, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources and helping people make their homes more climate resilient.
- Regenerative and inclusive city: Regenerating the waterways and land. Ensuring everyone can access zero carbon transport and has the ability to reuse and repair instead of buying new.
- Strong foundations: Communicate our progress and use data to drive informed decision making.

The priorities were presented to participants and they were asked to share their feedback and identify any other priorities that they feel are important to achieve the vision of a sustainable Sydney.

Unlike other focus groups, the participants were divided and not in general consensus of the priorities provided. The majority of participants agreed on the second priority – efficient and climate resilient buildings.

In regards to the other priorities, the participants identified the following issues:

- Priority 1 – requires large scale investment, which may be hard for community to understand or is ready for
- Priority 3 – though the priority is important, participants mentioned that this priority felt less tangible, and
- Priority 4 – was viewed as beneficial but requiring broader community involvement.

Experience of climate-related impacts

Participants were asked about the climate-related impacts they've experienced and how these have affected them.

Participants shared how rising temperatures, wildfires, and unstable weather patterns have disrupted daily life, posed health challenges, and heightened environmental concerns. Many emphasised the struggle to adapt to these changes, particularly highlighting the increased risk of fires and the detrimental effects of extreme heat on personal well-being and community resilience.

“Recently, everyone in Sydney has experienced temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, which seem to have set a historical record. This is what I find most difficult to adapt to.”

“Hot weather causes concentrated rainfall, which stops trains from running, making it impossible to travel green. Additionally, the rainfall can cause waterlogging on roads, posing a safety hazard to travelers”.

- Focus group participants

Participants also raised the instability with the dramatic increases of wild weather. Participants noted the following impacts of wild weather include:

- Train delays and traffic jams – which impact getting to work, home or other commitments
- Strong winds cause inconveniences in daily life, and sometimes outdoor activities need to be cancelled
- Drought or heavy rain lead to reduced crop yields and higher vegetable prices, and
- Smoke from fires have caused decline in air quality, and thus impacting health.

Barriers to responding to climate impacts

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably.

Similarly to the other focus groups, participants highlighted the challenges, including the inability to modify living spaces due to renting apartments, limited access to relevant resources, and financial constraints that hinder the adoption of climate-resilient measures.

“The recycling locations are sometimes far away and difficult to reach. For example, if you want to recycle batteries at OfficeWorks, there are none near my address.”

“Central air conditioning requires additional fees, and the owner adds the maintenance costs to the tenant’s usage fee, which has increased by three times”.

“The owners of investment properties are not actively investing in sustainable equipment. For tenants, facing the increasingly hot summer, this affects their sleep and quality of life.”

- Focus group participants

The discussion also underscored the impact of specific weather conditions, such as strong winds and heavy rainfall, which exacerbate daily challenges by raising safety concerns and restricting mobility, particularly in relation to taking public transport to work and home.

Living sustainably – how participants do this now and what they want to do in the future

Participants were asked what they currently do in their everyday life to be more sustainable. Many participants were actively adopting practices to reduce their environmental impact.

Participants mentioned the following:

- Driving electric vehicles
- Recycling and minimising the use of disposable items
- Using public transport and walking instead of driving
- Sorting of rubbish and recycling
- Picking up litter

- Use energy saving LED light bulbs
- Use own cloth carry bags, and
- Use less disposable tableware.

Participants also mentioned that their apartment building were undertaking the following sustainable initiatives:

- Garbage sorting in apartment buildings
- Energy saving motors lighting, and
- Sensor lighting in common areas.

“Our apartment recently launched a new sustainability project. Our residents recycle leftover food using food recycling bags provided by the City. The collected food, such as fruit peels and vegetables, is processed and degraded to be used as fertilizer.”

- Focus group participant

Barriers to living sustainably

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably. Like the other focus groups, many of the participants noted that the rising cost of living impacts their response to climate impacts and restricted access to appropriate resources and difficulties in implementing modifications within rental properties.

“I want to buy a portable air conditioner, but it is difficult to install in my living situation, which will increase the installation cost. Besides, I also need to ask the landlord for permission.”

“An old apartment in the city where you cannot install air conditioning because these old houses need to be protected”.

- Focus group participants

Support needed from the City of Sydney

Participants were asked if there is anything the City of Sydney can do to support them to live in a more sustainable way. The suggestions raised by participants are summarised below:

- Increase frequency of buses and trains to encourage patronage and less reliance on cars
- Lower public transit costs
- Improve infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling
- Community based initiatives– outdoor nature experiences, workshops on waste transformation, sustainability focused events for children and teens
- Encourage targeted communication and training programs for building managers and non-English speakers to facilitate effective implementation of sustainable practices, and
- Government subsidies to encourage the adoption for renewable energy solutions.

“We provide free language tutoring to non-native English speakers, especially our parents, so that they can better integrate into and adapt to the Australian living environment.”

“We can continue to implement the \$2 cap on public transportation costs. This is because many people will give up low-carbon travel due to the high cost of public transportation. For example, if you have a long commute, you may prefer to drive a private car to save time.”

- *Focus group participants*

6. People with disability

6.1 What we heard

Feedback on priorities

The City of Sydney has identified four key priorities to help achieve their vision of a sustainable and resilient Sydney. These priorities are:

- Resilient and efficient operations: Ensuring our work and suppliers reduce energy, water and waste in our buildings, pools, parks and other facilities.
- Efficient and climate resilient buildings: Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels by supporting electrification to cut emissions, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources and helping people make their homes more climate resilient.
- Regenerative and inclusive city: Regenerating the waterways and land. Ensuring everyone can access zero carbon transport and has the ability to reuse and repair instead of buying new.
- Strong foundations: Communicate our progress and use data to drive informed decision making.

The priorities were presented to participants and they were asked to share their feedback. Feedback provided by participants is summarised below:

Accessibility

Participants raised a range of concerns about accessibility in the City of Sydney. There was a clear tension between sustainability and accessibility. Many environmentally sustainable initiatives – such as promoting e-bikes for active transport and planting street trees for urban cooling – were seen to often have unintended negative impacts on accessibility for people with disability.

Participants spoke about footpaths and walkways being inaccessible due to a range of factors, including tree roots damaging the surface, leaf litter creating a slip or trip hazard, e-bikes or other obstacles being discarded in the middle, overhanging vegetation and in some more hilly areas, the general gradient of the landscape. One participant noted that using the bike lane feels far safer and easier than the footpath, highlighting the inadequacy of current footpath conditions for people with disability.

Participants highlighted the need for greater maintenance of footpaths to ensure they remain accessible for people with disabilities, and they recommended dedicated parking stations for e-bikes and better regulation of the private industries responsible for managing them.

Participants also spoke about the lack of seating, lack of accessible toilets and lack of shaded, covered routes to get from place to place while being protected from the weather. Participants indicated that this lack of accessibility means that they are not able to independently move around the city, which significantly impacts their quality of life and ability to participate in society. One participant shared that, as a wheelchair user, they rely on their own “map” of the city to be able to navigate around, knowing from experience where they can and cannot go.

“E-bikes turn accessible routes into inaccessible routes by leaving these big, heavy bikes all over the place.”

“Maintaining the footpaths is absolutely crucial to help me move around the city.”

“Sydney is a very inaccessible city in general. Accessibility is never universal. I end up being in my own little map of the city, corners, knowing where I can go and where I can’t go. There are specific areas in the City of Sydney that I know I can’t go – either due to the footpaths, accessible toilets and structural issues, like cobblestones on the path.”

“I have arthritis, so I can struggle to walk properly if it’s not a flat and even surface.”

“I love bike paths – I often end up in the road because the footpaths aren’t accessible, and being in the bike path is so much safer for me than being on the road with cars, because I’m the height that I am. My wheelchair is just not a height where drivers can see me easily.”

- Focus group participants

Maintenance of public infrastructure

Participants expressed frustration with the lack of upkeep and maintenance of public spaces. One participant felt that while the City opens many new public open spaces, they do not maintain existing spaces to a sufficient standard.

One participant suggested that the City should invest in more greenery both within and around buildings, as well as in the regeneration of waterways and land.

Public transport

Participants spoke about the challenges they face in using public transport, noting that buses and trains are not accessible for people with disability. One participant who uses a wheelchair indicated that train stations are inaccessible to them due to the lack of staff on train platforms, who they rely on to set up the ramp so they can get onto the train. The participant spoke about not being able to catch the bus during peak hour because the buses are full and do not have enough physical space for their wheelchair to fit, and in some cases the driver won’t stop for them. They also noted that buses and trains do not have restraints to help secure the wheelchairs safely while in motion.

Participants indicated that bus shelters are not fit for purpose or protected from the weather, and they do not provide a welcoming environment for people to sit and wait for the bus. It was also noted that tactile tiles are rarely updated when bus stops are moved, which significantly impacts people with vision impairments who rely on the tiles to navigate their way, and wheelchair users who need the tiles so they know where to wait to access the fold-out ramp.

Participants spoke about the need to investigate public transport routes and services. One participant shared that due to route changes, it takes them two buses to reach a location just ten minutes away, and an hour to get to the beach – highlighting the challenges people with disability face when travelling around the City.

“The Metro and light rail are a thousand years ahead of the buses and the trains in terms of accessibility.”

“Particularly as a wheelchair user, trains and buses can be quite dangerous because we don’t have restraints. For some reason we just get to tip around.”

“The tactile tiles never get updated when the when the bus stops get moved. I’m never sure where to wait. I’m supposed to wait at the tactile tiles, because when they have a fold out ramp it needs to be level with the ground for me to get onto the bus safely. Sometimes if the tactile tiles are in the wrong spot, they’ll fold out the ramp and it won’t be level with the ground so they have to get back in the bus, drive up a bit and try again.”

“It’s not just living in comfort, but also mobilising in comfort and safety, which is an important part of actually living in the community and feeling connected to the community.”

- Focus group participants

Cost of living

Participants highlighted the severity of the City’s housing crisis. One participant shared that they are planning on moving out of Sydney due to increasing rents and overall costs associated with living in the City.

Transparency and communication

Participants spoke about the importance of transparency, particularly in relation to the strong foundations priority. They noted that they would like to see the City clearly communicating about their progress in executing actions identified in strategies and plans, such as the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Experience of climate-related impacts and barriers responding to climate-related impacts

Participants were asked about the climate-related impacts they’ve experienced and how these have affected them.

Impact of urban heat

Participants discussed the challenges associated with urban heat. One participant stated that they experience overheating as a medical issue and they rely on air conditioning to be able to stay cool. This creates significant electricity costs, which are exacerbated by the electricity costs required to operate their wheelchair.

Participants raised concerns about heat in and around community facilities, such as Green Square Library. One participant mentioned that the library is often uncomfortably hot in summer due to its west-facing orientation and glass structure. They also noted that it is difficult for older people or those with mobility issues to access the library, as they often have to navigate stairs. The participant suggested that ramps should be installed to improve accessibility.

Participants want to see more seating and shaded areas throughout the LGA, so they are able to rest and seek shelter from the heat.

“Heat is one of the main things that exacerbates my day-to-day symptoms.”

- Focus group participant

Impact of excessive rainfall

Participants identified rain as causing other climate-related impacts, with one participant noting that wheelchairs are particularly vulnerable to wet conditions. Excessive rainfall can damage wheelchair motors and this creates financial challenges, as wheelchairs can cost up to \$10,000 and almost one year to have replaced through the NDIS scheme. This impacts participants' quality of life and overall wellbeing.

A participant noted that the lack of accessible, sheltered routes and public transport stops in the City of Sydney means that they then need to rely on their support worker driving them around, which takes up valuable allocated support time that could be better spent in other ways. Participants also spoke about excessive rain causing footpaths to be slippery and creating safety hazards for wheelchair users.

A participant shared their experiences of flooding due to excessive rainfall, which resulted in the lift in their apartment building being out of service for a month. This participant uses a wheelchair so this meant they were not able to get in or out of their apartment, and were required to relocate for that month without any compensation on their rent.

"The amount of rain that Sydney gets is an extraordinary barrier to me getting around because my wheelchair motor is not waterproof."

"The way we get around is just so important because not just living in comfort, but also mobilising in comfort and in safety, is such an important part of actually living in the community and feeling connected to the community."

"I feel like landlords don't necessarily always meet their responsibilities as housing providers. They think of it as an investment."

- Focus group participants

Living sustainably – how participants do this now and what they want to do in the future

Participants were asked what they currently do in their everyday life to be more sustainable. Participants generally indicated that taking action to be more sustainable day-to-day is not always easy for them due to the costs involved and the difficulty they face in moving around the city independently.

Some participants stated that they are doing what they can in terms of recycling and repairing as much as possible and using solar. One participant expressed a desire to be able to recycle food waste in the future and participate in composting.

"I've learned how to do a lot of stuff myself (out of necessity and cost barriers mainly) but I have a screwdriver and a sander and a sewing machine, and I know how to use all of them. I still probably produce more waste than anyone in my building because I can't meaningfully shop in person by myself."

"I recycle as much as possible. I think our recycling options in Australia are very limited, and a lot of it's just going to landfill."

"We have a lot of solar electricity and that has reduced our power bill, and that feels like something worth having and worth doing."

- Focus group participants

Barriers to living sustainably

Participants were asked what barriers they face that make it harder to live sustainably. Participants generally spoke about cost being prohibitive, and public and active transport not being accessible or viable, resulting in more reliance on cars to get around.

“I can't drive so I end up having to get lifts with my support worker a lot of the time, because the public transport options around me just aren't usable.”

- Focus group participant

One participant spoke about their reliance on online shopping (due to physical shops not being accessible or easy to get to) as a barrier to living sustainably. The high shelves and narrow aisles in supermarkets prevent them from being able to shop independently, so they turn to online shopping which inevitably leads to waste. Participants expressed a desire to reduce the amount of packaging and waste created from online shopping.

One participant raised concern with the government's decision to ban plastic straws. The participant indicated that plastic straws are a necessity for people with disability. The participant noted that the removal of plastic straws is a tokenistic response to a much broader environmental crisis.

Support needed from the City of Sydney

Participants were asked if there is anything the City of Sydney can do to support them to live in a more sustainable way.

The suggestions raised by participants are summarised below:

- More frequent recycling collections or drop off opportunities. Participants noted that the current schedule is too infrequent, and when people leave bulky items on footpaths for council collection, it blocks the footpath and makes it no longer accessible
- Establishing and promoting reuse spaces, such as Reverse Garbage and other reuse and repair initiatives
- More FOGO/compost bins for apartment buildings
- More public seating and shaded seating areas
- Improving ventilation and air quality in buildings
- Prioritising maintenance of hydrotherapy pools and accessible showers, and
- Improving access to filtered water by providing more public water stations.

“I'd just love to see more funding being put into [sustainability] initiatives.”

“I'd like to see more public seating on the roadside – seating that enables us disabled people to get out into the community more often.”

- Focus group participants

