

# **RESILIENT SYDNEY – OUTCOMES AND INSIGHTS REPORT**

**Prepared for the Resilient Sydney  
Office**

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**Clear Horizon**

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## Acronyms

100 RC	100 Resilient Cities initiative
RCN	Resilient Cities Network
ROC	Regional Organisation of Councils

# Executive summary

## Introduction

Resilient Sydney is part of the global Resilient Cities Network, formerly the 100 Resilient Cities initiative. Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, the initiative helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges and disruptions that are a growing part of the 21st century.

The Resilient Sydney Office, hosted by the City of Sydney, began work in late 2015, initially undertaking the 100 Resilient Cities process focusing on the development of the Resilient Sydney Strategy, governance and networks. The five-year Resilient Sydney Strategy document (2018-2023), launched on 24 July 2018, is the first resilience strategy for metropolitan Sydney. The Strategy includes 35 Actions under 5 directions to strengthen Sydney's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster, whilst ensuring all of Sydney's communities can access opportunities to thrive. The Directions are a direct response to the five core resilience challenges identified through a technical assessment and stakeholder engagement process. The Strategy, which has been developed with all of Sydney's metropolitan councils and contributors from the NSW Government, business and community organisations, aims to effect change across the systems of the city to achieve these objectives. Over 1000 people and 100 organisations in Sydney were engaged in the strategy development process. The strategy is currently in implementation.

Resilient Sydney is a collaboration with all 33 councils of metropolitan Sydney and the NSW Government. Resilience Ambassadors representing each council support the program and ensure their part of the city is represented and engaged. The Resilient Sydney Steering Committee provides metropolitan governance over the program and includes executive leader representatives from each of the planning districts of metropolitan Sydney, NSW Government, business and the community sector. The program is funded by local government and hosted by the City of Sydney.

## This report

Mid-way through the strategy period, the purpose of the Outcomes and Insights Report is to document what and how Resilient Sydney has achieved in effecting the systemic changes required to tackle Sydney's core resilience challenges, to date. It describes the theory behind the Resilient Sydney approach, with a special focus on the role of the Resilient Sydney Office and governance in effecting change, and discusses the outcomes achieved and insights surfaced in relation to the theory.

The primary audiences for the report are change practitioners and the key actors in the metropolitan Sydney governance system. The Outcomes and Insights Report complements the Program Report produced by the Resilient Sydney Office, which details the progress towards and achievements of Resilient Sydney's five directions and 35 actions.

The Outcomes and Insights Report was produced by Clear Horizon between May 2020 and May 2021, in close consultation with the Resilient Sydney Office, and included the collection of data from 175 stakeholders, including via a survey (154 respondents) and interviews (21 - the Resilient Sydney Office and 20 key informants external to the Resilient Sydney Office).

## Outcomes

As the first cross-system intervention in metropolitan Sydney, Resilient Sydney has significantly changed the political and institutional landscape and set an important precedent for city-wide resilience.

Although the Resilient Sydney program is only partway through implementation, several impacts are emerging at the structural, relational and transformational levels. These impacts are more visible among the organisations and institutions that participate directly in Resilient Sydney than in the wider community and are a function of the time it takes to effect systemic change.

There is also evidence that these changes are well-positioned to endure. As Kania et al (2018) note, systems changes are more likely to be sustained when working at all of these levels (structural, relational and transformational levels), which Resilient Sydney is certainly achieving.

While it is not always possible to determine the extent to which they can be attributed directly to Resilient Sydney, most of the changes identified through the review are supported by multiple informants and have been triangulated to some degree through the different data collection methods employed for this report.

### Structural change

Resilient Sydney has instigated changes in policies, practices and resource flows at the local, state and federal levels, and within the private and other sectors. The language of urban resilience has been significantly mainstreamed and embedded both within strategic documents and within the general discourse.

The establishment of Resilience NSW as a state level agency is a key structural change that demonstrates the level of political capital and priority that resilience now attracts. While there undoubtedly have been many causal factors, several informants felt that Resilient Sydney's work contributed to this change.

There is strong evidence that Resilient Sydney has **facilitated a greater focus on resilience in policies and strategic processes at all levels of government** (but particularly local and state), and to some degree in the private and non-government sectors. The majority (62%) of survey respondents said their organisations had developed new plans, tools, processes, policies and/or service models as a result of their participation in Resilient Sydney, and around half (51%) had embedded Sydney's top shocks, stresses and challenges into organisational planning and reporting. Interviewees also described a range of actions to incorporate resilience into policy and strategic instruments.

Resilient Sydney's efforts to establish a sound evidence base through both extensive stakeholder engagement and data-focused initiatives have been credited with **improving the way decisions are made and resources are allocated**, particularly at the local government level. Having access to accurate, consistent data has enabled local governments to identify the most strategic areas of focus and to apply their resources accordingly. Numerous stakeholders singled out the Resilient Sydney Platform as being particularly valuable. There was also evidence that Resilient Sydney has increased the ability to capture useable, representative data on social cohesion, and to make this available to local governments.

There is clear evidence that Resilient Sydney has **instigated greater investment in resilience across all stakeholder groups**.



This has included investments in assets or projects that focus on resilience, the establishment of resilience jobs or roles, investment in capacity building programs and investment in assets and projects to address resilience challenges. Interestingly, survey respondents from the business sector were most likely to have established resilience jobs or roles, even though the business-focused component of Resilient Sydney has not been fully implemented due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and resource limitations.

As examples of the types of projects organisations are investing in, a number of high-profile initiatives were driven or supported by the Resilient Sydney Office and implemented through collaboration between multiple stakeholders. These include the Resilient Sydney Platform, the Cool Suburbs rating tool, and the Cooling the City Masterclass hosted by Penrith City Council. Additionally, there were examples of projects or structures that previously focused more narrowly on sustainability in particular and have been reshaped to incorporate a wider resilience agenda.

The fact that 30 councils invested directly in Resilient Sydney by making voluntary financial contributions was seen by several informants as evidence of Resilient Sydney's value, and the extent to which it had been able to build support and momentum for resilience work.

### Relational change

Resilient Sydney has **established or strengthened relationships** between councils, between state and local government stakeholders and between the public, private, academic and community sectors. These relationships are widely considered to be more positive, collaborative and productive than they had been previously, and this is generally attributed to Resilient Sydney's work.

The impacts of this change were evident in the reported response to recent stresses and shocks. For example, interviewees described how local governments across metro Sydney came together to support the recovery effort in response to recent natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple interviewees also felt that the trust-based relationships established through Resilient Sydney enabled stakeholders to act more quickly and effectively. The more 'joined up' approach facilitated through the Resilient Sydney Office is evident in the successful delivery of the Resilient Sydney data Platform.

These and other examples also demonstrate how the Resilient Sydney team has been able **to influence the distribution of decision-making power**. Through the strength of its stakeholder engagement and its consistent focus on understanding and addressing local-level challenges, Resilient Sydney has elevated the role and importance of lived experience in the city, so that it is now more prominent in the decision-making hierarchy. This is also evident in the way some participants are engaging with communities. While recognising that progress and engagement will never be uniform across all councils, several stakeholders expressed a desire for Resilient Sydney to continue trying to increase buy-in among less engaged councils, to continue its progress in what one survey respondent described as "[extending] care and responsibility from the privileged core to the periphery".

Resilient Sydney has further influenced the distribution of decision-making power through its **effectiveness as a unified voice for local governments**, and the degree of influence and access it has been able to apply to local-state relations in particular. The benefits run in both directions: there are examples of where local perspectives and needs are represented more effectively within state-level decision making structures, as well as evidence that some state agencies are using Resilient Sydney's networks to communicate more effectively with communities and stakeholders 'on the ground'. For example, a state government agency interviewee described how they have been able to link directly into Resilient Sydney's existing networks rather than trying to develop new ones, which enabled them to engage more effectively and efficiently with their stakeholders.

Additionally, more effective collective advocacy by local governments via Resilient Sydney has led to examples where the **needs and challenges of local government are being better represented and understood at state and federal levels.**

### Transformational change

There is evidence that Resilient Sydney is **shifting mindsets** across state and local government and among other key stakeholder groups, such as the urban development sector. Transformational shifts are also evident in the 'mainstreaming' of resilience language and concepts. The evidence of mindset shifts is critical because, in terms of systemic change, it means that the structural and relational changes described above are more likely to endure.

Survey and interview findings show that elected officials and public servants who have engaged with Resilient Sydney have **increasingly begun to view their work through a resilience lens and have broadened their understanding of resilience** to include a far more holistic range of stresses, risks and challenges. Informants gave numerous examples where participation in or exposure to Resilient Sydney had instigated or contributed to shifts in the way people understood resilience. A commonly reported mindset change was a shift from focusing on sustainability (and climate change in particular) to embracing a broader and more holistic definition of resilience that recognises the range of shocks, stresses and challenges Sydney faces.

By positioning action at the local level whilst facilitating collaboration across councils and between state and local governments, Resilient Sydney has enabled stakeholders to address place-based risks while highlighting the interdependent nature of those risks. This means that **responsibility for building resilience is increasingly understood to be shared**, rather than resting with a single sector – be that councils, agencies, businesses or the community.

### Unintended impacts

There is some evidence of unintended impacts emerging from Resilient Sydney, though the evidence for these is not conclusive.

While Resilient Sydney is seen as a highly effective advocate for local government, there is some evidence that the extent to which it has filled this space may have modified the local government collaboration landscape in Sydney, which in turn may have changed the way some of its members engage with other local government forums, such as the Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs).

Additionally, while the efficiency and effectiveness of the Resilient Sydney Office has been a key factor in driving tangible change across metro Sydney, there was some concern that the centralised nature of the work done to date - and its dependence on key individuals - could have the unintended effect of reducing Resilient Sydney's own resilience as an initiative.

### Insights

Insights into how Resilient Sydney has achieved change to date, including strategic learning, have been organised against a modified form of triple loop learning identified by Cabaj (2019) as appropriate for the evaluation of systems change interventions. The first group of learning insights are drawn from the perspectives of the 175 stakeholders engaged in the mid-term review, while the second and third groups of insights are drawn primarily from the Resilient Sydney Office only.

## How Resilient Sydney has achieved change

Insights related to the implementation of Resilient Sydney are concerned with *how* Resilient Sydney has gone about effecting the outcomes described above and pay special attention to the effectiveness of the Resilient Sydney Office in its role as a backbone for networks, strategy delivery and city-wide change.

### *Core practices and activities*

The Resilient Sydney Office has been **a highly effective catalyst for change** according to the overwhelming majority of interview respondents. This is largely attributed to the intellectual, strategic and operational nous of its staff and key supporters, and the energy and commitment they embody. Further, the Office is seen as **a highly influential leader that is showcasing a model for change** to regional, state and international audiences. It has applied the technical risk thinking required to address resilience challenges within a holistic overview of the city system, enabling a rapid acceleration of shared learnings.

In analysing the core practices evident in the Resilient Sydney Office's work to date, three key themes have emerged as critical to successful implementation - stakeholder engagement, the establishment of an evidence base and capacity building.

The stakeholder engagement process used to develop the Resilient Sydney Strategy is extremely highly regarded and has underpinned the success of the program in several important ways, including:

- Giving Resilient Sydney legitimacy and soft power, because it can speak confidently on behalf of communities and stakeholders across metro Sydney.
- Laying the foundations for trust-based, collaborative relationships between key stakeholders.
- Helping the Resilient Sydney Office to provide highly tailored support that meets the needs of member councils.
- Elevating the inclusion and active consideration of local perspectives and lived experience within the urban resilience agenda.

Through a range of practical projects and targeted approaches, the Resilient Sydney Office has regarded the establishment of evidence as central to its work. Consistent, reliable, region-wide data and evidence are key to enabling effective, strategic action.

The Resilient Sydney Office has built local government and other stakeholders' knowledge about and capacity to address resilience challenges through the establishment of networks, the provision of tools, templates and advice to support practical projects, and delivering training and professional development. A very tangible aspect of this work has been building capacity to 'see the system' – and it is this focus that will facilitate enduring systemic change.

### *Relationships and processes*

The Resilient Sydney Office's **relationship building work is widely viewed as one of its key strengths and successes**. It has facilitated more widespread and effective collaboration by connecting stakeholders and supporting them to deliver strategic projects. A key insight here for the Resilient Sydney Office has been the extent to which connections are lacking between people in similar roles and the role the Office can play in actively facilitating those connections.

Despite the Office's success in facilitating collaboration and relationship building, progress appears uneven across councils. This is seen as being partly due to politics and willingness to engage, but also reflects differing levels of resourcing and experience among and within councils.

While this is to be expected with such a diverse group of councils, it is exacerbated by the fact that not all local government areas are equally prominent within state and federal policy agendas.

The Resilient Sydney Office is seen to be **highly effective in the way it manages and delivers processes**, from the stakeholder engagement work that guided strategy development through to the project management processes involved in the everyday work of implementation. This is generally attributed to the expertise, professionalism and high standards displayed by Office staff.

Several informants felt the Resilient Sydney Office could increase its visibility and its own effectiveness by better communicating its successes and learnings to a wider audience. This was seen by some as an opportunity to increase community awareness and share lessons with other regions, as well as an effective means for the Resilient Sydney Office to cement its own learning. The Resilient Sydney Office's communications are inherently constrained by the fact that it is auspiced under the City of Sydney, a large and complex organisation that necessarily has detailed procedures and protocols for public communications.

The difficulty and importance of good problem solving has been a key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office. The Office noted limiting norms and processes, including an appreciation of the time required, to properly understand problems.

### ***Capacity and resources***

The achievements of the Resilient Sydney Office are particularly impressive given the relatively small team, and the scale and ambition of its mandate. This is attributable to the personnel attached to the Office and the enabling role of the Resilient Cities Network (RCN).

Many respondents noted the intellectual, strategic and operational nous of the Office staff, referencing the combination of the Chief Resilience Officer (CRO)'s focus on data and deep knowledge of the key issues and stakeholders, and the exceptional community and stakeholder engagement expertise of the (former) Deputy Resilience Officer in particular. Several informants also noted the level of influence and energy brought to the table by the Chair of the Steering Committee and CEO of the City of Sydney, and the political support from City of Sydney' Lord Mayor. Informants described a dynamic, highly motivated team that 'makes things happen'.

A key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office has been the role of the RCN in enabling its work, in terms of both building the capacity of the Office in 'doing structural collaboration' as well as the legitimacy the RCN brings to the Resilient Sydney mandate. Being able to contextualise the resilience agenda within an international movement provides a great level of legitimacy and facilitates a sense of coming together to solve a common problem.

Within the context of capacity and resources, there are also several limitations on the Office's effectiveness - relating to funding and resourcing, and a lack of authority.

Despite its exceptional effectiveness to date, the Office was widely considered by stakeholders to be under-resourced. This, along with the lack of a sustainable funding model, is seen to be undermining the Office's potential to fully implement the strategy now and into the future.

The Resilient Sydney Office's ability to effect change is constrained by its lack of decision making and other authority. While it has been able to build significant 'soft' power through its effectiveness as a unified voice for councils, its reputation for technical expertise and its ability to draw on a solid evidence base, it cannot 'compel' action at any level. This lack of authority is also seen by some as a barrier to its ability to engage more effectively with state government partners. Working out how to lean into this reality has been key for the Office.

## **Learnings about the challenge, context and Resilient Sydney strategy**

The second set of insights relate to what is being learnt about the challenges that Resilient Sydney is trying to address, the systems and context within which those challenges sit and the strengths and limitations of the Resilient Sydney strategy.

### ***The challenges we are trying to address***

The key challenge – disjointed governance – was understood from the beginning and has sat at the heart of the work of Resilient Sydney since its inception. The Resilient Sydney team made a decision to directly tackle metro governance challenges, rather than viewing them as an important but unavoidable constraint.

The governance structures for Australian cities are complex and contested, and the way Resilient Sydney has engaged with this issue is a key reason why it has succeeded where other cities have not. Through its concerted efforts to neutralise competitiveness and division between and within state and local governments, and to build trust and shared goals among participating stakeholders, the Resilient Sydney Office has made significant progress in addressing governance challenges. Stakeholders expressed surprise at the extent of the Office's success on this front.

Despite the impressive progress to date, this issue has not been fully resolved and the need for improved collaboration and clear lines of responsibility will continue to be relevant for Sydney's resilience into the future – especially with the recent establishment of Resilience NSW and the plan to establish a National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency.

Another aspect of the challenge, which was not initially appreciated by the Resilient Sydney Office, is how the challenges of disjointed governance “actually manifest themselves within individuals” - a structural problem at an organisational design level and system design level which is then also held in the human thinking that comes with that, i.e. is embedded in humans who make decisions across the city and in those organisations. This insight has shaped the approach of the Resilient Sydney Office – to continue to focus on building the capacity of individuals to ‘see the system’ they are operating in.

### ***The systems and context in which the challenge is embedded***

The extent of the positional power between the levels of government, combined with the relatively limited understanding amongst state government agencies of how to ‘work together to deliver operational instructions down the chain to the delivery agents in local government’, has been a key insight for the Office. This situation is seen to make it difficult for local government to understand, and action, priorities. This insight has shaped the way the Office both sees and plays its role as a translator between the levels of government.

Another critical aspect of the context is the metro scale willingness to engage, as displayed by the ‘very stable, committed and engaged governance arrangement’ (the Steering Committee) that Resilient Sydney has worked hard to maintain.

### ***The strengths and limitations of the strategy***

The key strength of the strategy that has emerged over time is the very real importance of having a common agenda enshrined from a community base, and which was not politically modified.

Other, less important, strengths noted through interviews were that the strategy is broad enough to encompass changes in priorities when context changes and has been written in a way that other organisations can adopt - or make use of within existing strategies.

Limitations identified included the 'large range of quite small-scale things' and how the way of working required to really effect change (systems thinking) is implicit rather than explicit in the strategy. While the strategy does encompass 35 Actions of varying scale and anticipated impact, rather than some of the much bigger and more important resilience issues that Sydney does face, it is 'true' to the change context within which it sits, i.e. the governance context of Australian capital cities compared to other cities.

## Learnings about the change-makers

The third type of insights, which are harder to surface, relate to how the key actors in the system are 'being' in their role as change makers. Insights about this were largely sourced from the Resilient Sydney Office, given their specific change-making catalyst role and the observations the Office has been able to make about this particular type of learning over time.

The insights at this level relate to the Resilient Sydney Office coming to understand, and therefore better play, its role as a 'translation service' between layers of government, the habitual responses in interactions between layers of government and the primacy of maintaining an equity 'mindset' and focus.

It took time for the Resilient Sydney Office and other change makers in the system to understand that while it was working with and representing all 33 councils in metro Sydney in its backbone role, that it sits (albeit not formally) between layers of government and provides a translation service between those layers.

Another key insight relates to a habitual response that is at the core of addressing the challenge of disjointed governance – the initial, and very prevalent, attitude amongst key system actors of '*why would I need to be involved in something at the metropolitan level?*'. This attitude or habitual response of only working within, rather than beyond, boundaries is less prevalent now, illustrations of which can be seen in the stakeholder responses provided in other sections of this report.

While the primacy of community voice and community need has been identified as the key strength of the Resilient Sydney strategy, the maintenance of an equity 'mindset' and focus has been singled out as particularly significant in the implementation of the strategy. These insights have tangibly manifested in changes to the way the Office goes about its work.

## Use of learnings

Cabaj suggests the development and use of strategic learning is the cornerstone of effective systems change efforts, and an outcome in and of itself. He notes that 'strategic learning is even more important once you realise that it is possibly the only outcome in a system change [effort] that social innovators and evaluators can control' (p7, 2019).

As outlined above, the Resilient Sydney Office has been able to articulate a wide range of insights. More importantly, it has provided numerous tangible examples of how those insights have shaped the way the Office 'shows up' in its role as a backbone organisation, and how approaches have been adapted to better effect the change that Resilient Sydney is seeking to achieve.

## What next

The report concludes with a set of recommendations for short-medium-term operational level changes that respond to the program strengths and challenges described within this report. It also outlines strategic matters for consideration, which would ideally guide decisions about how the Resilient Sydney agenda should be progressed into the future.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Resilient Sydney

Resilient Sydney is part of the **100 Resilient Cities initiative**. Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, the '100RC' initiative helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century.

The **Resilient Sydney Office**, hosted by the City of Sydney, began work in late 2015, initially focusing on the development of the Resilient Sydney Strategy. The five-year **Resilient Sydney Strategy** document (2018-2023), launched on 24 July 2018, was the first resilience strategy for metropolitan Sydney and includes 35 Actions in five directions to strengthen Sydney's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster, whilst ensuring all of Sydney's communities can access opportunities to thrive. The Strategy, which was developed with all of Sydney's metropolitan councils and contributors from the NSW Government, business and community organisations, aims to effect change across the systems of the city to achieve these objectives.

Resilient Sydney is a collaboration with all 33 councils of metropolitan Sydney and the NSW Government. Resilience Ambassadors representing each council support the program and ensure their part of the city is represented and engaged. The Resilient Sydney Steering Committee includes representatives from each of the planning districts of metropolitan Sydney, NSW Government, business and the community sector.

## 1.2 Theoretical underpinnings

The design and implementation of Resilient Sydney draws on resilience theory, and systems change and place-based approaches.

### Resilience theory

City resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, business and systems within a city to survive, adapt and thrive, no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience<sup>1</sup>.

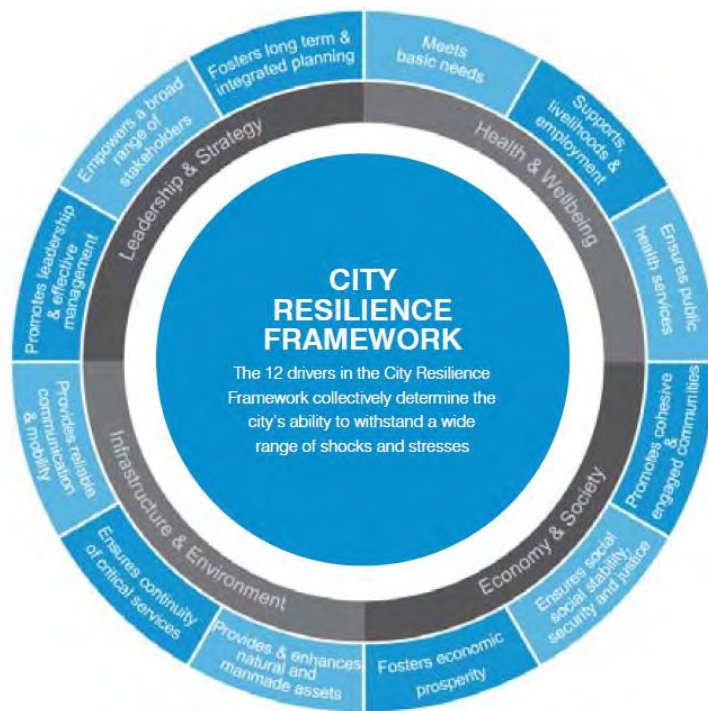
Resilient Sydney adopts the City Resilience Framework<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1), which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of cities within four 'dimensions' comprising 12 'drivers' of resilience. The 12 drivers collectively determine a city's ability to withstand a wide range of shocks and stresses within the four dimensions of:

- **Health and wellbeing:** the essential city services that safeguard human health and diverse and secure livelihoods.
- **Economy and society:** systems that enable urban populations to live peacefully, and act collectively.
- **Infrastructure and environment:** the way in which built and natural assets provide critical services and protect residents.
- **Leadership and strategy:** effective leadership and management, empowered stakeholders and integrated planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Resilient Sydney (2018). Resilient Sydney – a strategy for city resilience.

<sup>2</sup> Developed by Arup and the Rockefeller Foundation for the 100 Resilient Cities initiative: <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/city-resilience-framework/>



**Figure 1 City Resilience Framework**

An assessment<sup>3</sup> of Sydney’s resilience based on the City Resilience Framework identified five core resilience challenges for Sydney. The Resilient Sydney Strategy’s five **Directions** are a direct response to the five resilience challenges identified and include:

1. People centred city: addressing the challenge of inequitable growth.
2. Live with our climate: addressing the challenge of pressure on our health, environment and economy.
3. Connect for strength: addressing the challenge of declining social cohesion.
4. Get ready: addressing the challenge of a lack of understanding of risks and interdependencies.
5. One City: addressing the challenge of disjointed governance.

Taking action to proactively manage city challenges and interdependencies offers access to multiple benefits, or a ‘resilience dividend’<sup>4</sup>. When disruptions are expected, planned for and turned into

<sup>3</sup> Resilient Sydney used the 100 Resilient Cities methodology to prepare a Preliminary Resilience Assessment for metropolitan Sydney in 2017. This globally tested methodology uses the following suite of tools: City Context; Compilation of major shocks, stresses, and external forces or ‘city trends’; 100RC Assets and Risk Assessment Tool; 100RC Perceptions Assessment; and 100RC City Actions Inventory.

<sup>4</sup> The capacity to take advantage of new personal, social, and economic opportunities that previously seemed out of reach, and to reap multiple rewards and outcomes for every investment made in resilience (Rodin, 2014).



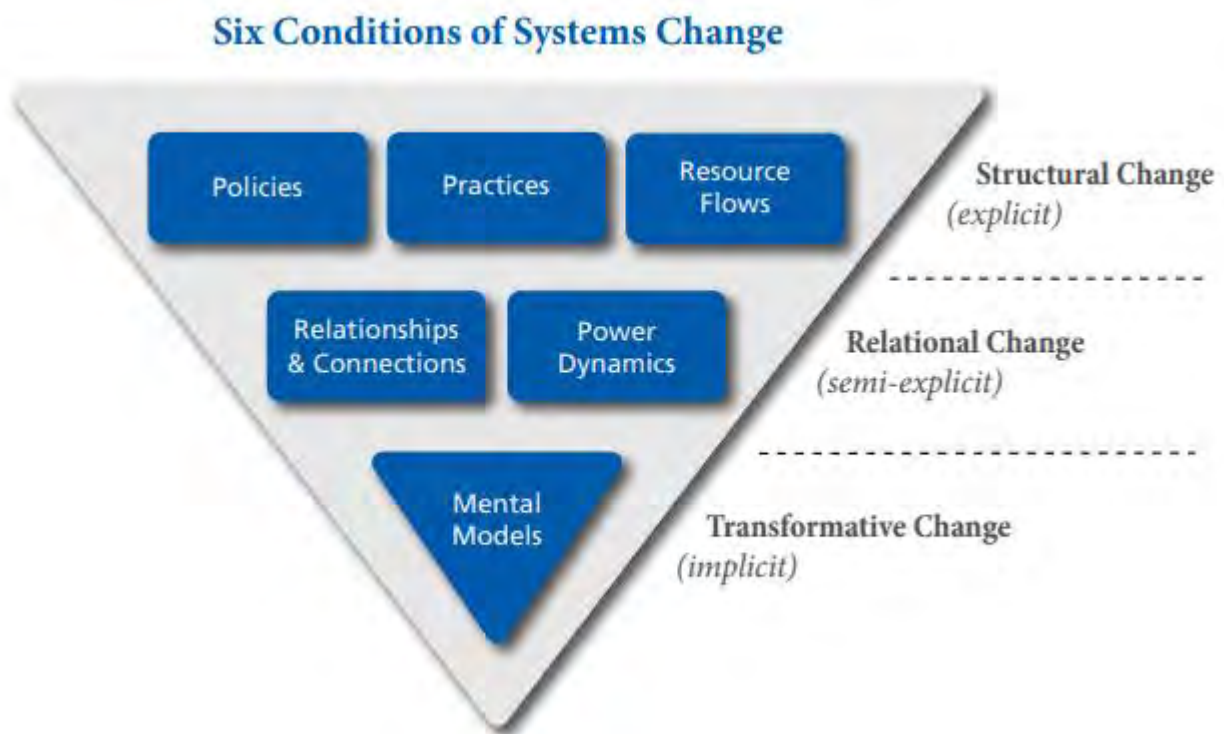
opportunities, they offer financial, social and environmental benefits. These opportunities can be understood through the City Resilience Framework and achieved through:

- Preventing or mitigating stresses and shocks
- Adapting to unexpected shocks and stresses
- Rapidly returning to normal and revitalising after disruptions
- Accessing benefits where there are no disruptions
- Productive peaceful prosperity and improved equity in times of stability.

### Systems change approaches

Systems change approaches refer to initiatives that seek to change the underlying anchors that hold a system in a non-optimal state, i.e. to shift the conditions that hold the problem in place. This requires looking at the interconnected causes that sit below the problem.

*The Water of Systems Change* framework provides an actionable model for those interested in creating systems change identifying the most powerful conditions for structural, relational and transformative change (Figure 2).



**Figure 2 Six Conditions of Systems Change (FSG, 2018)**

The Resilient Sydney Strategy is designed to tackle the conditions holding its five core resilience challenges in place. Given the nature of the problems that Resilient Sydney is trying to address – including institutional change in the context of an historical lack of connected decision making and action – a key objective for Resilient Sydney is to increase governance and community connections, as well as collaboration as a vehicle for systemic change.

Systems change approaches are not ‘programs’ per se; rather they are often clusters of programs, agencies, actors or networks working together with the ambition of solving a wicked problem in a transdisciplinary manner. They also differ from programs in that they have a looser scope and generally have a longer timeframe than a program.

Systems change approaches often work across sectors with many different organisations working in partnership. They may work to address several sectors and preconditions, rather than being restricted to one sector, or one type of intervention.

In line with these approaches, Resilient Sydney recognises no one organisation can address the challenge of improving the city’s resilience, and instead looks at how organisations, leaders and citizens can work together, across and beyond traditional boundaries.

## Place-based approaches

Place-based approaches are collaborative, long-term approaches to building thriving communities, delivered in defined geographical locations. They are characterised by partnering and shared design, shared stewardship and shared accountability for outcome and impacts. Generally, place-based approaches are a response to complex, interrelated or challenging issues, including (though not limited to) cross sectoral challenges such as city-level resilience; social issues impacting those experiencing, or at risk of, disadvantage; or for natural disasters.

The Resilient Sydney Strategy expects an improved understanding of the vulnerabilities, interdependencies and risks for everyone in metropolitan Sydney, at both the metropolitan and local place-based scales. It is expected that the Actions within the strategy will lead to place-based systems change – in policies, legislation, regulation and service models, and subsequently in improved resilience in place.

## 1.3 Resilient Sydney theory of change

A theory of change model was prepared for Resilient Sydney in September 2019 as part of the development of the Resilient Sydney Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework. The model drew on a generic theory of change model for place-based systems change to demonstrate ‘how’ Resilient Sydney expects to fulfil the intent of its five directions, rather than simply describing the activities and outcomes of the actions (Figure 3).

The model utilises the following hierarchy, from bottom to top:

- **Foundations** – the foundational elements that need to be in place in order that the influencing work of the Resilient Sydney Office and Action facilitators and collaborators can occur.
- **Influence activities** – the work done by both the Resilient Sydney Office and Action facilitators and collaborators that starts the process of change.
- **Enablers for change** - the expected outcomes resulting from the implementation of the influence activities and which are the necessary precursors for systemic changes.
- **Systemic changes** - the systemic changes for resilience across metropolitan Sydney that Resilient Sydney expects to influence.
- **City level resilience** - the desired city-level impacts of Resilient Sydney.

## Theory of change narrative

The theory of change model outlines:

- How the work of the broader partnership (by Resilient Sydney Action facilitators, collaborators, and other partners) is expected to influence the systemic changes for resilience across metropolitan Sydney.
- How the work of the Resilient Sydney Office is expected to enable, catalyse, and support this process of change.

As the model shows, the **vision** of Resilient Sydney is that the city of Sydney is connected, inclusive and resilient.

The **overall strategy** for achieving a connected, inclusive, and resilient Sydney is to **strengthen Sydney's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster whilst ensuring all of Sydney's communities can access opportunities to thrive**. This responds to the relative importance of the drivers of resilience for Sydney and its unique resilience challenges.

Strengthening Sydney's capacity in this way first requires a range of outcomes for citizens and organisations, as well as policies, tools, processes, and service models to be created and realised ('Enablers for change [including Action outcomes]').

These outcomes are not the result of individual Actions but rather the result of the collective work of Resilient Sydney, i.e. the work of the Resilient Sydney Office in its role of enabling, catalysing and supporting this process of change, as well as the work of Action facilitators and collaborators in delivering on the Strategy and its 35 Actions. Through this work, we expect to see **citizens and organisations**:

- building an **understanding** of place-based risks, interdependencies, vulnerabilities, and their responsibilities/duties of care in relation to place-based risk
- building **capacity** for place-based preparation, planning (mitigation and adaptation), response and recovery
- connecting to build **collaborations, networks and aligned actions** to address Sydney's resilience challenges.

The work of the Resilient Sydney Office and Action facilitators and collaborators is also expected to see the development of policies, tools, processes, and service models to prepare and manage risk, for example, inclusive decision making and governance models, standards, etc.

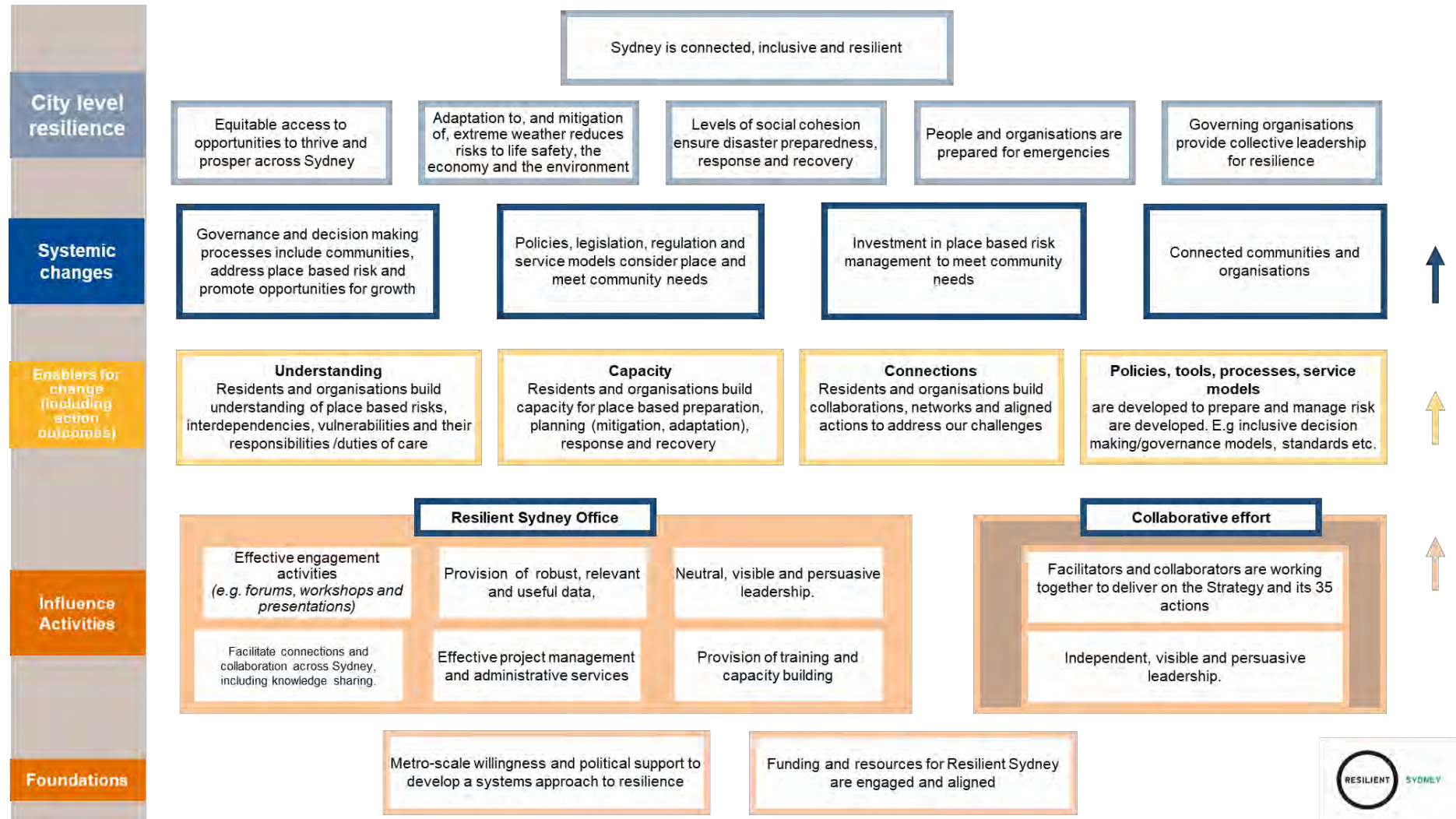
If these outcomes are realised, **systemic changes for resilience can be expected** across four domains of change, including:

- Governance and decision-making processes include communities, address place-based risk and promote opportunities for growth
- Policies, legislation regulation and service models consider place and meet community needs
- Investment in place-based risk management to meet community needs
- Connected communities and organisations.

The realisation of these systemic changes will influence the resilience of Sydney both directly, and indirectly through their contribution to the broader drivers of city-level resilience:

- There will be more equitable access to opportunities to thrive and prosper across Sydney.
- We will see adaptation to, and mitigation of, extreme weather reducing risks to life safety, the economy, and the environment.
- Social cohesion levels will be such that they ensure disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Figure 3 Resilient Sydney theory of change model



## 2 Mid-term review scope and methodology

### 2.1 Scope

#### Purpose

The purpose of the mid-term review of outcomes and insights was to provide an evidence-based description of the impact of Resilient Sydney to date and capture insights about influencing city resilience through Resilient Sydney.

#### Audience

The primary audiences for the report are change and resilience practitioners in a range of settings, including:

- Resilient Cities stakeholders, including 100 Resilient Cities (100RC); Resilient Cities Network (RCN); The Rockefeller Foundation.
- Resilience and systems change practitioner individuals.
- Government change practitioners: City of Sydney, Local Government Agencies/Councils of Greater Sydney, Local Government NSW, Resilience NSW, CSIRO and other State, Territory and Federal governments working to increase resilience.
- The National Resilience Taskforce.

#### Key questions

The key questions the Outcomes and Insights Report seeks to address include:

1. What changes have resulted from Resilient Sydney and how were those changes achieved?
2. What was learnt along the way about achieving change?

### 2.2 Methodology

The mid-term review was conducted by Clear Horizon between May 2020 and May 2021, in close consultation with the Resilient Sydney Office.

The Clear Horizon team met weekly with the Resilient Sydney Office over the 12-month period to plan the review process, identify stakeholders and key informants for survey and interview, and to develop the survey and interview guides.

#### Data collection

The review included a desktop review of existing relevant documentation, stakeholder surveys and key informant interviews.

The purpose of the **survey** (Appendix 1) was to capture stakeholders' perspectives and experiences in attending and/or participating in Resilient Sydney activities, and the extent to which their engagement in Resilient Sydney has influenced their and/or their organisation's thinking and work related to resilience.



The **survey** was distributed to 873 people across the broad sectors of 'council', 'state government', 'business' and 'other', with 154 respondents completing the survey (a response rate of 17.6%). Council comprised more than half the survey respondents (55%), followed by State Government (16%), Business (11%) and 'other' sectors (19%), including Community (9%), Academics (6%) and 1-2 individuals each from federal government, industry bodies and the RCN. Clear Horizon conducted all survey analysis.

The purpose of the **interviews** (Appendix 2) was to capture and assess the achievements of Resilient Sydney to date, and the insights generated over the past almost five years to improve the resilience of metro Sydney. Informants represented the broad sectors of 'council', 'state government', 'business' and 'other'. Of the 20 interviews conducted, council comprised more than one third of respondents (n= 7), followed by Business (n=4), State Government (n=3), Federal Government (n=2), other Global/RCN cities (2), NGO (n=1), and the Resilient Sydney office (n=1). Interviews were conducted by both Clear Horizon and the Resilient Sydney Office, with Clear Horizon conducting all interview results analysis.

## Data analysis

The outcomes results were analysed and synthesised against the six conditions for systems change presented in Figure 2. The conditions definitions provided by Kania et al (2018) include:

- Structural (explicit) change:
  - Policies: Government, institutional and organisational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity's own and others' actions.
  - Practices: Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise their work.
  - Resource flows: How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.
- Relational (semi-explicit) change:
  - Relationship and connections: Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.
  - Power dynamics: The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organisations.
- Transformational (implicit) change:
  - Mental modes: Habits of thought—deeply held belief, assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

Insights were analysed against the three types of learning suggested by Cabaj (2019) for organising learning when tackling complex challenges (Table 1).

**Table 1 Three types of learning (Cabaj, 2019)**

Type	Questions
Single loop	<p>What are we learning about what we are doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths and limitations of core practices and activities</li> <li>• Strengths and limitations of relationships and processes</li> <li>• Strengths and limitations of capacity and resources</li> </ul>
Double loop	<p>What are we learning about our assumptions, understanding and thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenges we are trying to address</li> <li>• The systems and context in which the challenge is embedded</li> <li>• The strengths and limitations of our strategy</li> </ul>
Triple loop	<p>What are we learning about how we are being?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our emotional triggers</li> <li>• Our habitual responses</li> <li>• Our social norms/group dynamics</li> <li>• Our individual and shared values and narratives</li> </ul>

## Reporting

Two results workshops were held to discuss, test and refine emerging findings prior to reporting. The first results workshop was with the Resilient Sydney Office in April 2021 and informed the first draft of the report. A second results workshop was held with the Resilient Sydney Steering Committee in July 2021 and informed the second draft of the report. The final report incorporated the feedback from both the Resilient Sydney Office and the Steering Committee following their review of the second draft.



## 3 Findings – outcomes

As the first cross-system intervention in Greater Sydney, Resilient Sydney has significantly changed the political and institutional landscape and set an important precedent for city-wide resilience.

Although the Resilient Sydney program is only partway through implementation, several impacts are emerging at the structural, relational and transformational levels. These impacts are more visible among the organisations and institutions that participate directly in Resilient Sydney than in the wider community and are a function of the time it takes to effect systemic change.

There is also evidence that these changes are well-positioned to endure. As Kania et al (2018) note, systems changes are more likely to be sustained when working at all of these levels (structural, relational and transformational levels), which Resilient Sydney is certainly achieving.

While it is not always possible to determine the extent to which they can be attributed directly to Resilient Sydney, most of the changes identified through the review are supported by multiple informants.

The outcomes findings have been organised against the conditions for structural, relational and transformative change, as outlined by Kania, et al (2018) and which underpin the Resilient Sydney theory of change.

### 3.1 Structural changes

Resilient Sydney has instigated changes in policies, practices and resource flows at the local, state and federal levels, and within the private and other sectors. The nature and extent of these changes varies and as noted above, it is not always possible to determine the extent to which they can be attributed directly to Resilient Sydney. However, most of the changes described here are supported by multiple informants and have been triangulated to some degree through the various data collection methods employed in the mid-term review.

#### Policy and strategic instruments

Interview and survey results provide strong evidence that Resilient Sydney has facilitated a greater focus on resilience in policies and strategic processes at all levels of government (but particularly local and state), and to some degree in the private and non-government sectors.

The majority (62%) of survey respondents said their organisations had developed new plans, tools, processes, policies and/or service models as a result of their participation in Resilient Sydney, and around half (51%) had embedded Sydney's top shocks, stresses and challenges into organisational planning and reporting (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4 Actions taken as a result of participating in Resilient Sydney (survey)**

Interviewees also described a range of actions to incorporate resilience into policy and strategic instruments. The following quotes illustrate some of these changes:

#### Local government

*“Councils now have their own resilience strategies for the first time ever, and I put that down to the work of Resilient Sydney.” (Interviewee – State government)*

*“Working directly with the [Resilient Sydney] team ... has been invaluable to our current project work in emergency management. We've aligned our work by undertaking the 100 Resilient Cities risk assessment approach to inform our revised Local Emergency Risk Assessment and Local Emergency Management Plan.” (Survey respondent – Local government)*

#### Metro, state and federal level

*“[A state level organisation] incorporated the consideration of Resilient Sydney’s findings into their master plans for their new communities ... [by] actually playing out those scenarios for their new communities or developments and seeing where they could put in controls to mitigate the exposure to those particular shocks ... The findings are being translated by other organisations and departments on living projects across Sydney [who are] delivering really tangible resilience outcomes in the delivery of the new metro system, and new land developments and resilience planning for the private sector organisations.” (Interviewee - Business)*

*“In Sydney the [resilience] agenda is embedded in the Greater Sydney Commission, it’s embedded in the Department of Planning, in the Healthy Places and Spaces division and in the Climate Change component; and there’s a huge amount of work coming out of Infrastructure NSW and Infrastructure Australia on resilience, so I think some of the institutionalisation has happened already.” (Interviewee - Other)*

#### Non-government organisations

*“Resilience takes a priority in the work we do. Resilient Sydney helped create a set of frameworks to inform the built environment in terms of direction ... The Resilient Sydney program has contributed to the Green Star rating system” (Interviewee - Business)*

Further to the above, the establishment of Resilience NSW as a state level agency is a key structural change that demonstrates the level of political capital and priority that resilience now attracts. While there undoubtedly have been many causal factors, several informants felt that Resilient Sydney's work contributed to this change.

*"It's very hard to attribute it specifically to Resilient Sydney but [after] all their work, some of that narrative had changed and we now have a separate state government department that is actually called Resilience NSW." (Interviewee - Local government)*

*"The fact that there's a Resilience NSW now, that it's called that, and that Emergency NSW has shifted to focus on resilience more generally – I think that's due to [the Resilient Sydney Office's] influence." (Interviewee – Other)*

## Evidence-based decision making

Resilient Sydney's efforts to establish a sound evidence base through both extensive stakeholder engagement and data-focused initiatives have resulted in **a growing evidence base that is informing decision making and enabling stakeholders to deliver strategic interventions.**

Having access to accurate, consistent data has enabled local governments to identify the most strategic areas of focus and to apply their resources accordingly.

*"Decisions are [now] being data-led and people are more transparent, and that's deepened the knowledge of what resilience really is." (Interviewee - Business)*

*"The most significant experience with Resilient Sydney was being exposed to Dan Aldrich's research and models, which have helped inform some of our work related to 2020 bushfire affected communities in NSW. Personally, I've expanded my knowledge and organisationally, Dan's work has been a great reference." (Survey respondent – Other)*

Perhaps the most concrete example is the Resilient Sydney Platform, through which councils across metro Sydney report data on emissions, energy, water and waste. This has created a consistent, reliable, region-wide dataset which enables authorities to target policies and programs more strategically, as illustrated by the following example:

*"the [Resilient Sydney Platform] identified that stand alone homes were the largest source of emissions for our region, and as a result over the last two-to-three years we've focused on doing household energy programs ... having that dashboard means we can identify the largest source of emissions and then strategically deliver actions that align to reduce those emissions." (Interviewee - Local government)*

Numerous other interviewees from across stakeholder groups singled out the Resilient Sydney Platform as being particularly valuable. For example:

*"My department has seen how powerful the Resilient Sydney Platform is in assisting metropolitan councils to plan for carbon and waste outcomes" (Survey respondent – State government)*

There was also evidence that Resilient Sydney has increased the ability to capture useable, representative data on social cohesion, and made this available to local governments. One interviewee described an example where the Resilient Sydney Office had driven the inclusion of social cohesion questions into a state government survey, and worked with stakeholders to ensure the results would be combined with other data sets and made available to local governments:

*“The annual survey, which was economy and infrastructure focused, had no social cohesion questions. We had no luck getting social cohesion questions in at that time. [The CRO] was able as an external person [to] make this happen ... It’s a great result in terms of resilience and social cohesion: to be able to get that story right is quite significant because then you know what’s working and what’s not; you have a feedback system to refine your policies.” (Interviewee - State government)*

## Investing in resilience

There is clear evidence that Resilient Sydney has instigated greater investment in resilience across all stakeholder groups. This has included the establishment of resilience jobs or roles, investment in capacity building programs and investment in assets and projects to address resilience challenges. As a business interviewee explained, *“some of the larger councils have established resilience officers, and [developed a] program to coach them. That means you’re getting deeper embedment of the resilience framework at a council level”*.

The survey found that:

- Almost half (46%) of respondents had invested in assets or projects that focus on addressing local resilience challenges
- About a third of survey participants (32%) reported that their organisations had established jobs or roles focusing on resilience.

As shown in Table 2, these investments were present to varying degrees within every cohort.

**Table 2 I have/my organisation has taken action to (investment)**

	Council (n=84)	State GOV (n=24)	Business (n=17)	Community (n=14)	Academic (n=9)	Council GM / CEO (n=5)	All (n=154)
Invest in assets or projects that focus on addressing local resilience challenges	49%	46%	29%	29%	44%	80%	46%
Establish jobs / roles that focus on resilience	33%	25%	41%	29%	22%	40%	34%

Interestingly, survey respondents from the business sector were most likely to have established resilience jobs or roles, even though the business-focused component of Resilient Sydney has not been fully implemented due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and resource limitations.

As examples of the types of projects organisations are investing in, a number of high-profile initiatives were driven or supported by the Resilient Sydney Office and implemented through collaboration between multiple stakeholders. These include the Resilient Sydney Platform, the Cool Suburbs rating tool, and the Cooling the City Masterclass hosted by Penrith City Council. The quote below demonstrates the instrumental role Resilient Sydney plays as a catalyst for these types of investments.

*“One of the actions falling out of the Resilient Sydney Strategy is the Cool Suburbs tool ... Having Resilient Sydney back that project we were able to access funding from the state government for implementation. Resilient Sydney together with the Greater Sydney Commission are on the steering committee for the tool and they have been absolutely instrumental in getting that project scoped, and then also implemented... That would definitely not have happened without [Resilient Sydney] because the idea wouldn't have been there if they weren't involved in our work.”*  
(Interviewee - Local government)

Additionally, there were examples where organisations had expanded the focus of existing projects to reflect a wider resilience agenda.

*“I tend to do more community-facing things, so traditionally that's been things like running gardening workshops, sustainability newsletter etc. As we've taken more of the resilience focus on we've been promoting things like the Get Prepared app and that kind of broader resilience focus.”* (Interviewee - Local government)

The fact that 30 councils (91% of total metro Sydney councils) invested directly in Resilient Sydney during FY21 by making voluntary financial contributions was seen by several informants as evidence of Resilient Sydney's value, and the extent to which it had been able to build support and momentum for resilience work.

*“Local government partners started contributing to a funding model to continue the work ... That proves that there's value in the process.”* (Interviewee - Other)

## 3.2 Relational changes

Resilient Sydney has established or strengthened relationships between councils, between state and local government stakeholders and between the public, private, academic and community sectors. These relationships are widely considered to be more positive, collaborative and productive than they were previously, and this is generally attributed to Resilient Sydney's work. This change has resulted in increased networks and collaboration, greater ability to respond quickly and effectively to shocks and stresses, and a stronger voice for lived and local experience within decision making structures.

### Networks and collaboration

The Resilient Sydney team modelled and facilitated collaboration through practical projects and a range of networking and professional development activities.

*“Resilient Sydney has created a very effective network of all metropolitan Sydney councils sharing lessons learnt and not duplicating the work. I think others can leverage off this work and adopt it to their local area. Resilient Sydney's solid network has been a great success.”*  
(Interviewee – State government)

This has led to significant changes in the way local governments, state agencies and other stakeholders collaborate and engage around resilience. As evidence of this change, the majority (63%) of survey respondents had observed improved networks and collaborations between organisations that had participated in Resilient Sydney. A survey respondent described the significance of this as follows:

*“Resilience requires collaboration and makes sense as we are all trying to achieve the same outcome. It is smart to pool resources and share knowledge. The networks of relationships that are formed in the process of collaborating enhance our resilience. It’s the first time this has happened before and cannot be understated - it paves the way and builds the framework for future things we need to deal with.” (Survey respondent – Local government)*

The Resilient Sydney Platform and Cool Suburbs tool provide tangible examples of how positive relational changes such as increased trust and collaboration have led to tangible outcomes. These projects required councils to trust each other enough to disclose data, including potentially sensitive data relating to their own progress.

*The Cool Suburbs initiative [is] bringing together a lot of knowledge, and the database of measures and the councils contributing to that tool. Some [are] even willing to disclose their progress – that’s a huge shift from when it first started. Decisions are then being data-led and people are more transparent, and that’s deepened the knowledge of what resilience really is ... I’ve been surprised at how quickly the councils have trusted each other to share data. (Interviewee - Business)*

A key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office has been the extent to which connections are lacking between people in similar positions, and the role the Office can play in actively facilitating those connections:

*“People largely don’t know others who are doing basically similar jobs in another council – and at every level – so we now ensure at every meeting, session or event to make time for them to talk to each other and hear what’s happening in other parts of the city. They are creating relationships they don’t otherwise have and actually use each other to help bounce forward best practice. There is nowhere else that they are making those connections at the moment.” (Interviewee – Resilient Sydney Office)*

Despite the Office’s success in facilitating collaboration and relationship building, **progress appears uneven across councils**. This is seen as being partly due to politics and willingness to engage, but also reflects differing levels of resourcing and experience among and within councils. While this is to be expected with such a diverse group of councils, it is exacerbated by the fact that not all local government areas are equally prominent within state and federal policy agendas. While recognising that progress and engagement will never be uniform across all councils, several stakeholders expressed a desire for Resilient Sydney to continue trying to increase buy-in among less engaged councils, to continue its progress in what one survey respondent described as “[extending] care and responsibility from the privileged core to the periphery”.

## **Response to shocks and stresses**

The impacts of Resilient Sydney’s work to build trust and relationships were evident in the response to recent stresses and shocks. Interviewees described how local governments across metro Sydney came together to support the recovery effort after major flooding and bushfire events:

*“The very fact that resilience became a unifying topic, and the way that [the City of Sydney CEO] and [the CRO] brought people together, [was evident through events] like the floods that hit Picton – councils shared resources to help Picton clean up. I wonder whether that would ever have happened if there wasn’t that collaboration and understanding through resilience.” (Interviewee - Business)*



Multiple interviewees also felt that stakeholders responded more quickly and effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic because of the trust-based relationships and peer-to-peer connections established through Resilient Sydney:

*“[One of the most significant changes] is the speed at which local government was able to convene, react and respond to COVID last year, on the basis of a forum that Resilient Sydney had been building for three years.” (Interviewee - Other)*

*“The ability to discuss issues with colleagues in similar situations has been extremely beneficial, especially in the COVID situation. This has allowed for the exchange of information and lessons learnt.” (Survey respondent – Local government)*

*“In the unprecedented event of the pandemic, this safe environment allowed for unjudged openness of sharing experiences, providing advice and sharing information [which] contributed to ensuring a resilient local government supporting their communities” (Survey respondent – Local government)*

*“People have been able to respond more quickly in a crisis because they haven't second guessed [each other's] motives. If you get that trust right, that makes a significant difference in the recovery. If you don't get that trust right, everything else you do can't work.” (Interviewee - Business)*

### **Elevating local and lived experience**

The above and other examples also demonstrate how the Resilient Sydney team has been able to influence the distribution of decision-making power. Through the strength of its stakeholder engagement and its consistent focus on understanding and addressing local-level challenges, Resilient Sydney has elevated the role of lived experience so that it is now more prominent in the decision-making hierarchy. A survey respondent described the impact as follows:

*“[Resilient Sydney tackled] the major chronic stress of inequity throughout metropolitan Sydney and extends care and responsibility from the more privileged core to the periphery. This in turn inspires hope, empathy and builds greater connection, and enhances the capacity to solve complex and multilayered problems.” (Survey respondent - Other)*

This is partly about making sure that communities' and residents' voices are being heard by representatives and decision makers, as described by an interviewee:

*“That inclusivity – making sure lots of voices were heard, and the voices of the community being fed into the steering groups, so that we understood exactly what residents were saying. They're hard facts about sentiment, and that cuts across the politics really – because you're hearing broader voices saying this is what we need.” (Interviewee - Business)*

This elevation of local and lived experience is also evident in the way some Resilient Sydney participants are engaging with communities:

- Almost half of survey respondents reported that they or their organisations had included the community/customers in decision making for resilience (45%) or invested in assets or projects that focus on addressing local resilience challenges (44%), and about a third (32%) had taken action to include the community/customers in governance of resilience priorities.

- Beyond their own organisations, survey respondents had seen ‘signs of improvement’ at the community level including greater inclusion of community/customers in resilience planning (observed by 38% of respondents), increased social connections between residents/communities (35%) and increased emergency preparedness among residents (30%).

Resilient Sydney has further influenced the distribution of decision-making power through its effectiveness as **a unified voice for local governments**, and the degree of influence and access it has been able to apply to local-state relations in particular.

*“Effectively what we used to do as a council when there was something we wanted to advocate on would be, write letters to the ministers or whichever department; try to get the local papers engaged and effectively stamp our feet and say, this isn’t good enough – we need something to change. You’d write a letter to the Minister for Planning or what have you and it just goes nowhere. Whereas now, you actually get the impression that state government is listening to Resilient Sydney through the way they’ve been able to pitch themselves and their work.”*  
(Interviewee – Local government)

The benefits run in both directions: there are examples of local perspectives and needs being represented more effectively within state-level decision making structures, as well as evidence that some state agencies are using Resilient Sydney’s networks to communicate more effectively with communities and stakeholders ‘on the ground’. For example, an interviewee from a state government agency described how they have linked directly into Resilient Sydney’s existing networks rather than trying to develop new ones:

*“[Our agency] has now created governance network across seven regions ... but Resilient Sydney has [metropolitan Sydney] covered. I would rather at this point operate through their groups, which are well established.”* (Interviewee – State government)

This enabled them to engage more effectively and efficiently with their stakeholders:

*“Resilient Sydney has enabled me to engage with all of the metro councils about resilience, recovery and preparedness ... it’s also enabled us to collaborate more closely, for state and local to share their ideas so that we can work together more.”* (Interviewee – State government)

Additionally, more effective collective advocacy by local governments via Resilient Sydney has led to examples where the needs and challenges of local government are being better represented and understood at state and federal levels. A local government interviewee explained the outcome as follows:

*“When we talk to our state government stakeholders there’s often a disconnect between their expectations of what local government can or should do, and the realities of working in local government ... [the Resilient Sydney Office is] making clear to state government what local government needs of them [in order] to do better. That might be policy changes but also might be data, might be access to tools ... I think they’ve been able to make that connection quite well in terms of translating, ‘well you’re expecting local government to do this but for them to do this, you need to do xyz’.”* (Interviewee - Local government)



### 3.3 Transformational changes

There is evidence that Resilient Sydney is shifting mindsets and building resilience knowledge and capacity across state and local government and among other key stakeholder groups, such as the urban development sector. Transformational shifts are also evident in the ‘mainstreaming’ of resilience language and concepts. The evidence of transformational shifts is critical because, in terms of systemic change, it means that the structural and relational changes described above are more likely to endure.

By positioning action at the local level whilst facilitating collaboration across councils and between state and local governments, Resilient Sydney has enabled stakeholders to address place-based risks while highlighting the interdependent nature of those risks. This means that responsibility for building resilience is increasingly understood to be shared, rather than resting with a single sector – be that councils, agencies, businesses or the community.

The transformational shifts described in this section reflect the Resilient Sydney Office’s dedication to building capacity, growing knowledge and sharing data, as described in section 4.1.

#### Shifting mindsets

Informants gave numerous examples demonstrating how participation in or exposure to Resilient Sydney had instigated shifts in the way people understood resilience. These include:

*“Some of our board members have come back to us [after Resilient Sydney events] saying, ‘I finally get it – that really made sense’ ... We’ve had conversations with [state government representatives] where they said, ‘hey, looking at [issues] through a resilience lens would actually be helpful some other issues as well’. I don’t think that would have happened if Resilient Sydney hadn’t done the work and engagement they’ve done.” (Interviewee - Local government)*

*“Each time I have engaged with the network of thinking that [Resilient Sydney] brings together from around Sydney, I am overwhelmed by the reality of the multitude of challenges and opportunities that could be addressed. It brings to life the complexity of a networked, dynamic and open system, both in regard to the metropolitan area of Sydney [and] its inevitable connection to the rest of the globe.” (Survey respondent – Business)*

*“Resilient Sydney has opened my eyes to a more important and valuable definition of resilience. Changing the frame of the question was fantastic at driving the outcome. It’s not about what you’re resilient against: it’s about what you want to become stronger.” (Interviewee - Business)*

A commonly reported mindset change was a shift from focusing on sustainability – and climate change in particular – to a broader understanding of resilience:

*“The narrative around anything that either the state government or councils are doing at the moment has very much shifted from talking about sustainability or liveability to include resilience. I honestly don’t think that was the case before Resilient Sydney started their work” (Interviewee – Local government)*

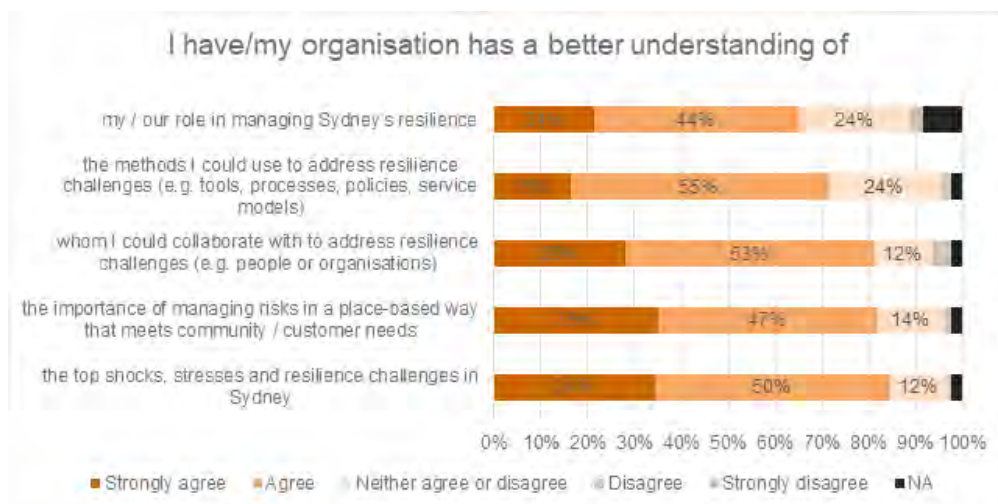
*“There was a real step change in people’s understanding of what resilience was and considering resilience beyond just climate change. [This relates to] very senior people within emergency management positions right through to local government practitioners, and also sustainability practitioners in the private sectors.” (Interviewee – Local government)*

*“Resilient Sydney [is] normalising what the word resilience means in a broader context ... Anyone I talk to now about resilience doesn’t just associate it with climate change - they frame it more around opportunities and risk.” (Interviewee – Business)*

## Knowledge and capacity

Survey and interview results show that elected officials and public servants who have engaged with Resilient Sydney have increasingly begun to view their work through a ‘resilience lens’, broadening their understanding of resilience to include a far more holistic range of stresses, risks and challenges. As shown in Figure 5 (below), respondents reported a strong improvement in their or their organisations’ understanding of resilience because of their participation in Resilient Sydney, particularly in regard to:

- The top shocks, stresses and resilience challenges in Sydney (84% agreed or strongly agreed)
- The importance of place-based risk management approaches (82% agreed or strongly agreed)
- Who they could collaborate with to address resilience challenges (81% agreed or strongly agreed)



**Figure 5 Improved understanding due to participating in Resilient Sydney**

Importantly, Figure 5 also shows that the majority of respondents better understood their role in managing Sydney’s resilience and the methods they could use to do so. When combined with the extensive capacity building work done by Resilient Sydney, this has resulted in a greater capacity to deliver resilience outcomes across all stakeholder groups.

*“Resilient Sydney has enabled information sharing and has really raised awareness of resilience in a very tangible sense into practical outcomes” (Interviewee – State government)*

An interviewee described how the shift in understandings of resilience has enabled their organisation to more holistically address shocks, stresses and challenges:

*“We’ve been trying to get people to understand urban heat – it’s quite a complex issue that touches upon so many things, like health, planning, research, water management, etc. We’ve really struggled to get people to understand all those aspects. Everyone seemed to focus in on the bit that seemed to be easier to solve, and that’s just planting more trees. So for us to be able to talk that through from the resilience perspective has made it easier for us to broaden the scope.” (interviewee – Local government)*

The structural and relational changes described in the previous sections also serve to highlight the increased capacity that has resulted from Resilient Sydney’s work. For example, the establishment of resilience roles can be expected to boost and embed capacity within organisations, as will the outcomes of resilience action plans and policies.

### 3.4 Unintended impacts

There is some evidence of unintended impacts emerging from Resilient Sydney. The evidence for these is not conclusive and it would be appropriate to monitor them at this stage rather than making any significant changes to the program.

Firstly, while Resilient Sydney is seen as a highly effective advocate for local government, there is some evidence that the extent to which it has filled this space may have modified the local government collaboration landscape in Sydney, which in turn may have changed the way some of its members engage with other local government forums, such as the ROCs.

*“We were part of a ROC which we left; personally, I find that I miss the coordination that that ROC delivered for us ... we don’t have that peer-to-peer connection as sustainability and resilience staff that we used to have as part of the ROC. It’s come a little bit out of Resilient Sydney but not a great deal.” (Interviewee – Local government)*

It is not clear why this council left its ROC nor whether it was connected to its participation in Resilient Sydney. A number of ROCs are also actively participating and using the Resilient Sydney networks and data products to support their own work with councils.

Secondly, while the efficiency and effectiveness of the Resilient Sydney Office has been a key factor in driving tangible change across metro Sydney, there was some concern that the centralised nature of the work done to date – and its dependence on key individuals – could have the unintended effect of reducing Resilient Sydney’s own resilience as an initiative. The risks relate both to financial security and ownership, described by an interviewee:

*“The model that’s been built [with] a steering committee that’s reported to – that suits the function of an organisation. But Resilient Sydney is not an organisation – it’s a network ... a loose connection of organisations that’ve come together to work on a particular challenge. Relying on funding into a central body to run it is dangerous, [in case] that falls over. From a convening perspective there’s a benefit in sharing that responsibility. That doesn’t mean you don’t have a secretariat, or work that’s funded and going onwards – you need all that stuff so there’s an organised component of it. But that organised component, that office, doesn’t need to run the convening.” (Interviewee – Other)*

The same interviewee also suggested a model that could ameliorate the risk by sharing responsibility more broadly:

*If you've got five or six general managers and they're on a rotating chair basis for example, it means that the responsibility is being shared rather than it being run in the most efficient way by [one organisation]. Because that creates a dependency, and as efficient as it is, all of our good resilience theory looks at how efficiency doesn't necessarily enable resilience – in fact it can undermine it. You need shared leadership.” (Interviewee - Other)*

This could also help to ameliorate the 'key-person dependency' risk mentioned under 'Core practices and activities: Demonstrating best practice' in section 4.1.

## 4 Findings – insights

This section presents key insights organised by the three types of learning outlined in Table 1, followed by a comment on the extent to which learning is being used by Resilient Sydney to improve the program. The first type of learning insights is drawn from the perspectives of the 175 stakeholders engaged in the mid-term review, while the second and third set of insights are drawn primarily from the Resilient Sydney Office only.

There is far more focus on insights related to the first type of learning - learning about what we are doing – as this is where we detail *how* Resilient Sydney has achieved the outcomes presented in the previous section. The discussion focuses primarily on the effectiveness of the Resilient Sydney Office in its role as the ‘catalyst’ that drives implementation of the strategy.

### 4.1 Single loop insights: learning about what we are doing

As suggested by Cabaj (2019) (Table 1), the single loop insights are described in terms of: core practices and activities, relationships and processes, and capacity and resources.

#### Core practices and activities

The Resilient Sydney Office has been a highly effective catalyst for change. The overwhelming majority (18 out of 20) of interview respondents reported it to be performing this role either ‘very well’ (n = 10), ‘well’ (n = 6), or ‘well to very well’ (n=2), with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. This is largely attributed to the intellectual, strategic and operational nous of its staff and key supporters, and the energy and commitment they embody. Further, the Office is seen as a highly influential leader that is showcasing a model for change to regional, state and international audiences. It has applied the technical risk thinking required to address resilience challenges within a holistic overview of the city system, enabling a rapid acceleration of shared learnings.

In analysing the core practices evident in the Resilient Sydney Office’s work to date, four key themes have emerged as critical to successful implementation: engagement and collaboration, the establishment of an evidence base, a focus on knowledge and capacity building, and demonstrating best practice. Each of these themes is described below.

#### Culture of engagement and collaboration

The stakeholder engagement process used to develop the Resilient Sydney Strategy is extremely highly regarded and has underpinned the success of the program in several important ways.

Firstly, it has given Resilient Sydney **legitimacy and soft power**, because it can speak confidently on behalf of communities and stakeholders across metro Sydney.

*“Everyone was talking about [the Resilient Sydney Strategy] and they are still talking about it years after its release, and they hold it up as a benchmark. It has got credibility because of the amount of stakeholder engagement that fed into the process, both at a senior government and private sector perspective and also the local vulnerable groups that were involved, which is reflected in the strategy.” (Interviewee - Business)*

Second, it laid the foundations for **trust-based, collaborative relationships between key stakeholders**. The Office’s relationship building work is widely viewed as one of its key strengths and successes, as demonstrated by the outcomes described under section 3.2.

Third, it has helped the Resilient Sydney Office to provide **highly tailored support that meets the needs of member councils**, because it has a deep understanding of the local context for each local government area. This has also enabled it to become a **strong unifying voice for local governments**, who trust the Resilient Sydney team to advocate on their behalf.

*“Because it’s very much a council-led, council-supported, council-focused program, they’re very aware of the needs and the challenges that local government face and they’re really good at advocating for outcomes to that higher level, of what we need.” (Interviewee - Local government)*

Finally, through best-practice engagement and action research, the Resilient Sydney Office **has elevated the inclusion and active consideration of local perspectives and lived experience within the resilience agenda**. This outcome is described under section 3.2.

### **Establishing an evidence base**

Through a range of practical projects and targeted approaches, the Resilient Sydney Office has regarded the establishment of evidence as central to its work. An informant explained the reasoning as follows:

*“Without data and evidence, people make poor decisions. So, we will get evidence, get the systems and the data to people to enable them to make better decisions. Also, for politicians not to make poor decisions. Those foundation things are the really strategic things because they build the capability that we can then put projects on top of ... we have to empower people with data.” (Interviewee - Local government)*

This focus on establishing a robust evidence base and improving data quality and access has enabled the outcomes described at section 3.1 (‘Evidence-based decision making’).

### **Building resilience knowledge and capacity**

The Resilient Sydney Office has built local government and other stakeholders’ knowledge about and capacity to address resilience challenges. It has provided intellectual, strategic and operational nous from its personnel and key supporters, bringing technical risk thinking into a holistic overview of the city system.

*“I think one of the key successes has been the capacity building that they’ve driven through all those metro councils ... Resilient Sydney makes it easier for councils to adopt resilience because they’re getting a toolkit, they’re getting a strategy and they’re getting guidance from Resilient Sydney.” (Interviewee – State government)*

It has done this by:

- Establishing and maintaining a network of Resilience Ambassadors and Resilience Officers within local government enabling a rapid acceleration of shared learnings
- Providing templates, tools and campaigns
- Researching local resilience issues
- Providing advice to support practical projects
- Delivering training and professional development to a wide range of stakeholder audiences.

Importantly, the Office has also built stakeholders’ capacity to ‘see the system’, which facilitates enduring systemic change. This is discussed under Section 4.2.



### **Demonstrating best practice**

The Resilient Sydney Office is seen to be **highly effective in the way it manages and delivers the program**, from the stakeholder engagement work that guided strategy development through to the project management processes involved in the everyday work of implementation. This is important not only because of its implications for strategy implementation, but also because it demonstrates good practice to participants and creates opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

*“It’s all very well to convene but you need also to be doing and modelling the behaviours and the actual projects – demonstrating what does this mean for decision making, for land use, policy, etc. Despite funding and resourcing constraints, I think RSO is doing a great job of actually getting on with the implementation of the strategy” (Interviewee - Other)*

*“I learnt so much working from [the Resilient Sydney] team ... It has been a real privilege to watch how the team works.” (Interviewee – State government)*

The nature and extent of the Office’s achievements to date are largely attributed to the expertise, energy and competence of key personnel. Many respondents noted the intellectual, strategic and operational nous of the Office staff, referencing the combination of the CRO’s focus on data and deep knowledge of the key issues and stakeholders, and the exceptional community and stakeholder engagement expertise of the former Deputy Resilience Officer, in particular. Several informants also noted the level of influence and energy the CEO of the City of Sydney brings to the table, and the political support from the Lord Mayor of Sydney. Overall, informants described a dynamic, highly motivated team that makes things happen.

*“I would like to call out the City of Sydney CEO and the CRO’s exceptional leadership, not only at a local level but globally ... they’ve developed such a good camaraderie and knowledge sharing, and I think it’s testament to their tenacity that they were instrumental in getting Rockefeller to stay involved [in 100 Resilient Cities]. That is really important for the work of Greater Sydney, and it takes exceptional leadership in a very small team to navigate that.” (Interviewee - Business)*

*“There’s nothing like a wily local operator to break down the really stale structures of state government departments, and that’s what [the CRO] did ... [The Resilient Sydney team] are so ready to initiate and instigate and they’re really energetic. The connector capabilities and the people that they know – they’re always poised to move when there’s an advantage for the population but also just in the spirit of collaboration. The generosity that that team has is incredible.” (Interviewee – State government)*

*“The opportunity that came from having someone as amazing as [the CRO] aligned with someone as influential as [the CEO] – the opportunity to push the Resilient Sydney agenda and embed it across Sydney was so huge ... they were a highly competent, capable team” (Interviewee - Other)*

While the strength of key personnel has clearly been a major factor in Resilient Sydney’s success to date, the reliance on the specific attributes of individuals within those roles also comes with risks. As one informant put it, “the proof [of success] comes from when the characters that have been responsible are no longer there”, noting that this key-person dependency risk “is a real challenge which some cities have stumbled over” (Interviewee - Other).

## Capacity, legitimacy and resources

The achievements of the Resilient Sydney Office are particularly impressive given the relatively small team, and the scale and ambition of its mandate. This is attributable to the personnel attached to the Office and the enabling role of the RCN. Within the context of capacity and resources, there are also several limitations on the Office's effectiveness - relating to funding and resourcing, and a lack of authority. While the feedback garnered through this evaluation about Resilient Sydney was overwhelmingly positive, several informants suggested a need to communicate its successes and insights to a wider audience.

### *The enabling role of the Resilient Cities Network*

A key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office has been the role of the RCN in enabling its work, in terms of both building the capacity of the Office in 'doing structural collaboration' as well as the legitimacy the RCN brings to the Resilient Sydney mandate.

The Resilient Sydney Office noted that while there was a general familiarity with collaboration processes within the Office in its early days, it 'didn't know what it didn't know' and that general knowledge was 'nowhere near' what was ultimately required. A lot was learnt from the other cities in the RCN, through interviewing other CROs and utilising the resources made available by 100RC in the early years.

*"The connection and support, and the resources made available through their (RCN) participation in some of the Resilient Sydney activities was really important early on and enabled the Office to convene people in a different and more effective way." (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

While less important now from a resource and capability building perspective, the enabling role of the RCN in lending legitimacy remains important. Being able to contextualise the resilience agenda within an international movement provides a great level of legitimacy and facilitates a sense of coming together to solve a common problem. The Office also acknowledged it 'isn't quite standing on its own two feet yet' without some sort of global reference:

*"...as for some people, without this, the Office is perceived as 'just schmucks from local government'. The global body is a resource that, if you didn't have it, it wouldn't work in the same way. We wouldn't open doors in the same way. It wouldn't get the attention in the same way." (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

### *Funding and resourcing*

Despite its exceptional effectiveness to date, the Office was widely considered by stakeholders participating in the mid-term review to be under-resourced. This, along with the lack of a sustainable funding model, is seen to be undermining the Office's potential to fully implement the strategy now and into the future.

The strategy is ambitious, and while the original business case for its implementation included a staffing level of six people, it has been operating at an average staffing level of between 2-3 people since its inception. Regarding the funding model, while some informants saw the fact that participating councils were voluntarily contributing funds as evidence of the Office's effectiveness and value, there were concerns that this model was not generating sufficient funds to achieve the full implementation of the strategy; and, that it was vulnerable to political and other shifts.

*“[The RSO] haven’t leveraged more funding from the private sector. They ... should have pushed harder to get more matched funding for the implementation of more measures. And securing funding for staff within the Resilient Sydney Office for a longer term to ensure more certainty and confidence that the Office was going to be around for a while.” (Interviewee - Business)*

With a small staff and limited resources, the Office had to decide which activities to prioritise for implementation. Consequently, it was not able capitalise on its early work to engage the private sector in Resilient Sydney (although the COVID-19 pandemic also played a role in this). The lack of progress on this activity was noted by several stakeholders, who felt that this was an important area of work to revisit.

*“There could be more investment with the private sector. That’s an area where there is a lot of investment in Sydney and it would be good to get more private sector and state [stakeholders] on side to keep things moving. This goes to sealing lasting change and requires additional investment and capacity” (Interviewee - Other)*

Ultimately, concerns about the constraints imposed by the resourcing and funding model were the key reason some interviewees rated the performance of the Office in fulfilling its role as ‘well’ instead of ‘very well’.

There have been several insights into the funding ‘dilemma’ that are useful to consider for future funding arrangements. The hosting of Resilient Sydney in local government, whose role is to manage the business of local government rather than pursue fundraising, has likely had a bearing on the comfort with which funding could be reasonably pursued. In addition, while there are always a range of options for resourcing/funding arrangements, any arrangement will come with advantages and disadvantages in relation to the loss or otherwise of ownership associated with funding arrangements.

Despite the constraints associated with less than anticipated resourcing, the Resilient Sydney Office made an interesting observation that while this has meant less has been done than intended,

*“...in hindsight we have actually done ‘enough’. It has almost been better to focus and be super clear about the things we had to do – it forced us to prioritise and be clearer about what we needed to do and in what order. We focused first on local government, and then increasingly focused on the relationship between local and state government...we have learnt along the way what ‘good enough’ looks like.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

The Office described how it has learnt to ‘right-size’ the implementation plan to the resourcing available, rather than right-size the resourcing to the implementation plan.

### **Authority**

The Resilient Sydney Office’s ability to effect change is constrained by its lack of decision making and other authority. While it has been able to build significant ‘soft’ power through its effectiveness as a unified voice for councils, its reputation for technical expertise and its ability to draw on a solid evidence base, it cannot ‘compel’ action at any level. This lack of authority is also seen by some as a barrier to its ability to engage more effectively with state government partners, with one informant suggesting that it would be better able to do this if it were hosted by a state level body rather than a local government.

Working out how to lean into this reality has been key for the Office.

*“We have learnt about the limitations politically of what we can do, and that what we can do pragmatically is help offer solutions. The more I am understanding that, maybe we could go out and be bolder [on some issues], but we would be saying “and here’s the five different options for how we could do that” – the ‘action’ would be more about what the collaborative network solution to solve that problem would look like. And now, people would say “oh, we’d participate in that – they’ve been [supporting the] solving of all these other things, maybe that’s the next one?” Three years ago there was no way we could, for example, pick some of these big issues to get the councils to [join together on].” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

## **Communications**

Several informants felt the Resilient Sydney Office could **increase its visibility and its own effectiveness by better communicating its successes and learnings to a wider audience**. This was seen by some as an opportunity to increase community awareness and share lessons with other regions, as well as an effective means for the Resilient Sydney Office to cement its own learning.

*“It would be good to see more rich information coming out [about the] challenges Sydney faced and some of the initiatives that have been implemented by Resilient Sydney ... I feel there is a risk in programs where the feedback loop isn’t closed. The implementation side could be communicated more broadly [to those] who would benefit from these initiatives, the people who are affected by these things.” (Interviewee - Business)*

*“I’m not convinced it has the profile with the community that it could ... Given its leadership role there could be some space to consider targeting [communications] more locally. Having community knowledge is the success of the strategy, so I think some public messaging would be useful.” (Interviewee – State government)*

However, this view was not unanimous. Another interviewee observed:

*“I have seen some of Resilient Sydney’s comms as a resident of the City of Sydney area, and I think the success of the program has been actively pushed through messaging.” (Interviewee - Business)*

The Resilient Sydney Office’s communications are inherently constrained by the fact that it is auspiced under the City of Sydney, a large and complex organisation that necessarily has detailed procedures and protocols for public communications.

## **4.2 Double loop insights - learning about our assumptions, understanding, and thinking**

The second set of insights relate to what is being learnt about the challenges that Resilient Sydney is trying to address, the systems and context within which those challenges sit and the strengths and limitations of the Resilient Sydney strategy.

### **The challenges we are trying to address**

The key challenge – disjointed governance – was understood from the beginning and has sat at the heart of the work of Resilient Sydney since its inception. The Resilient Sydney team made a decision to directly tackle metro governance challenges, rather than viewing them as an important but unavoidable constraint. The governance structures for Australian cities are complex and contested, and the way Resilient Sydney has engaged with this issue is a key reason why it has succeeded where other cities have not.

*“We have learnt that we did understand the challenge at the beginning – the diligence of the technical assessment at the beginning was absolutely money and effort well spent. We took a systems view, and implemented the tools from 100RC properly - and the outputs of that technical document didn’t get politically modified...which has been the case in other cities in the work and has undermined their ability to implement what has been needed.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

Through its concerted efforts to neutralise competitiveness and division between and within state and local governments, and to build trust and shared goals among participating stakeholders, the Resilient Sydney Office has made significant progress in addressing governance challenges. Stakeholders expressed surprise at the extent of the Office’s success on this front.

*“Everybody who’s done anything in Sydney says the governance is a nightmare. But the thing that Resilient Sydney took on as its number one challenge was, how can we work to solve some of the governance [and] some of the collaborative decision making? Because the forum, the structures, don’t exist for local government to collaborate collectively, as opposed to competitively. We don’t need to go into the state-local relationship or the City of Sydney-state relationship, which made the whole thing harder; but through the Chief Resilience Officer and the City of Sydney CEO working at different levels, the ability to create that relationship capital [was] the most significant thing. ... The Resilient Sydney approach [is] that we need to create this trust and this relationship capital across local government and with state government and other actors, to enable us to respond in the case of disruption.” (Interviewee - Other)*

*“The work they did to link the difficult governance structures around our city mattered.” (Interviewee - Business)*

*“The relationships between state and local government can be complex and Resilient Sydney has created a space to enhance these relationships ... There are probably only a handful of other cities in the [Resilient Cities] network who have been taking things at such a broad metropolitan level. I would say the approach in general is quite commendable.” (Interviewee - Other)*

Despite the impressive progress to date, this issue has not been fully resolved and the need for improved collaboration and clear lines of responsibility will continue to be relevant for Sydney’s resilience into the future – especially with the recent establishment of Resilience NSW and the plan to establish a National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency this year.

Another aspect of the challenge, which was not initially appreciated by the Resilient Sydney Office, and which the Office has highlighted as a key insight is how the challenges of disjointed governance “actually manifest themselves within individuals, who then hold those views about ‘their parts’ of the system but don’t understand the nature of the challenge - because the governance and system design places them into thematic silos and there is no incentive for them to get out of their silos and cross-implement or understand other parts of the system or any other parts of the layers. This is true of private enterprise and services between business and government as much as it is of local and state government.”

This part of the challenge was described as a structural problem at an organisational design level and system design level which is then it’s also held in the human thinking that comes with that, i.e. is embedded in humans who make decisions across the city and in those organisations.



This insight has shaped the approach of the Resilient Sydney Office:

*“We were naïve in the beginning and now it is very concrete in the way we work: we have learnt that to have systems change you need to have all parts – policy, data and evidence, and human capacity building – in order to be effective and have any kind of longitudinal impact. The minute you stop capacity building, people stop ‘seeing’ the system – it is almost like the system tends towards siloing and so everything falls back to silos, the parts, the geographies. Seeing the integrated, embedded whole, which is what we are asking people to do and where we are seeing the change happening, stops if it’s not being actively worked on.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

### The systems and context in which the challenge is embedded

The extent of the positional power between the levels of government, combined with the relatively limited understanding amongst state government agencies of how to ‘work together to deliver operational instructions down the chain to the delivery agents in local government’, has been a key insight for the Office. This is seen to make it difficult for local government to understand, and action, priorities.

Despite the presumed universality of such positional power, it was also described as something that people (including, initially, the Resilient Sydney Office) don’t fully understand or appreciate: *“it took a while to really clock that properly, and I am still regularly tripped up by it”.* (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)

This insight has shaped the way the Office both sees and plays its role:

*“I have learnt to recognise that most of the job...has been to actually ‘show’ this problem to [people]. Instead of talking about resilience content or whatever, it is actually a functional structural problem about the way they understand what their role is and the problem that creates for others, and why they are not delivering what they [intend] most of the time.*

*We have set up the networks to show this challenge between the layers [of government] at both ‘ends’...the big networks have enabled the people at those layers to communicate what is and isn’t working for them at each level, and to build the relationships in a comfortable, more equitable, accessible way, with a kind of ‘there is no blame game here’... enabling a relative kind and good conversation to happen.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

Another critical aspect of the context is the metro scale willingness to engage, as displayed by the ‘very stable, committed and engaged governance arrangement’ (the Steering Committee) that Resilient Sydney has worked hard to maintain.

*“[the metro scale willingness to engage] was already there at the beginning and its just got more engaged over time, and we absolutely couldn’t have done it without that. You have to have that mandate at the political level to act; the public and political mandate have to both be there to do this stuff.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

### The strengths and limitations of the strategy

The key strength of the strategy that has emerged over time is the very real importance **of having a common agenda enshrined from a community base**, and which was not politically modified as described above.



*“For resilience programs going forward it will be vital when doing place-based work that it be politically agnostic. You have to watch the way in which you ensure that community voice and community need gets primacy. That’s the single most important thing - if the strategy hadn’t had that community mandate, something beyond an organisational structure driving the ‘why’, then we would have had a very different program, a very different set of collaborators, and I don’t think we would have been anything like effective.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

The critical importance of understanding how to do engagement well and its role in building a public mandate has also been a key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office that emerged through the strategy development process. An interviewee summarised this as follows:

*“Australia is almost unique in that it’s one of the few countries where the city government has no power to solve any of this stuff through legislation or through ‘hard power’ - it doesn’t have the budget, it doesn’t have the decision-making power, it doesn’t have any of that. So the way in which Resilient Sydney was able to build that credibility and soft power was through the participatory process ... It was by engaging across the whole city in all different subregions with representative samples of views across the city ... and saying, ‘this is the view of Sydney and its community’. That was the power. Because it was very hard for anybody from state government to say, ‘local government has come to tell us how to do our job again’ – no, it’s actually come from the community. It’s very hard to not take that seriously if your agenda is about improving community outcomes.” (Interviewee - Other)*

Other, less important strengths noted through interviews were that:

- the strategy is broad enough to encompass changes in priorities when context changes
- it has been written in a way that other organisations can adopt - or make use of within existing strategies.

Limitations identified included the ‘large range of quite small-scale things’ and how the way of working required to really effect change is implicit rather than explicit in the strategy. There is relevant context to both of these limitations.

While the strategy does encompass 35 Actions of varying scale and anticipated impact, rather than some of the much bigger and more important resilience issues that Sydney does face, it is ‘true’ to the change context within which it sits, i.e. the governance context of Australian capital cities compared to other cities. As noted by the Resilient Sydney Office:

*“There are some really big, important resilience issues that we have not tackled because of the [limited] level of influence and control we have over those things, e.g. really tackling some of the big critical infrastructure issues is not where our layer of government, the Resilient Sydney Office or any of the Resilient Sydney Steering Committee [members] have any context or ability to influence properly, so it was a strategic decision to not tackle that in the strategy directly. We were unclear if we would even be able to get [those agencies] to a meeting, let alone do anything differently. As a result, it reads – as a metro level strategy – as a big miss, and that is true but there is a real context for that. Not everyone understands that.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

In terms of being more explicit about the way of working required to effect change (systems thinking), the Office noted:

*“We didn’t understand that then [when the strategy was written] and even if we did and wrote about it, I’m not sure others would have understood it either. [As a result] it doesn’t go far enough to saying: ‘the intent is that we are going to pilot this and turn it into this thing that would then be permanent – shift it into a policy setting that would embed [that thinking] properly so that its then structural.’” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

### 4.3 Triple loop insights - learning about how we are being

The third set of insights, which are harder to surface, relate to how the key actors in the system are ‘being’ in their role as change makers. Insights about this were largely sourced from the Resilient Sydney Office, given its specific change-making catalyst role and the observations it has been able to make about this particular type of learning over time.

The insights at this level relate to the Resilient Sydney Office coming to understand, and therefore better play, its role as a ‘translation service’ between layers of government, the habitual responses in interactions between layers of government and the primacy of maintaining an equity ‘mindset’ and focus.

It took time for the Resilient Sydney Office and other change makers in the system to understand that while it was working with and representing all 33 councils in metro Sydney in its backbone role, that it sits (albeit not formally) between layers of government and provides a translation service between those layers:

*“It is unusual, that we’re in between a layer of government almost. Not quite – we are just a collaboration of it – but we are providing a translation service between the levels. It took time for us to understand that, and now we have more recognition from other people in the system that that is what we also do. We understood and leant into our role as a translator – rather than having the attitude of ‘No, we shouldn’t have to do that; people should understand this stuff.’” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

The difficulty and importance of good problem solving has been a key insight for the Resilient Sydney Office. The Office noted limiting norms and processes, including an appreciation of the time required, to properly understand problems.

*“It is hard to understand the problem properly because the problem is in this political space and there are all these other cultural pieces that are part of the problem. It is common to start off thinking it’s a technical problem and it needs a tool, but it’s often a capacity problem that needs people to be doing something differently so that others can do their bit properly... so what people think the problem is at the beginning and what they actually need to solve for are often really different and increasingly our role has been to support working through the problem definition process much more carefully at the beginning.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

Another key insight relates to a habitual response that is at the core of addressing the challenge of disjointed governance – the initial, and very prevalent, attitude amongst key system actors of ‘*why would I need to be involved in something at the metropolitan level?*’. This attitude or habitual response of only working within, rather than beyond, boundaries is less prevalent now, illustrations of which can be seen in the stakeholder responses provided in other sections of this report. Related to this habitual response are the observed norms around ways of engaging between different levels of government, that can be quite disrespectful.

*“[the Office] has really tried to shift that to improve the level of basic respect between the layers and recognition of the fact that we all have a role to play and everyone needs to understand their role better, and connect and listen to each other better. There’s a really interesting dynamic there that we [the Office] are still learning how to get that right as a formula.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

While the primacy of community voice and community need has been identified as the key strength of the Resilient Sydney strategy, the maintenance of an equity ‘mindset’ and focus has been singled out as particularly significant in the implementation of the strategy. This is in the context of a pre-existing ‘tone’ previously weighted between Eastern Sydney/the CBD and ‘the rest of the city’, or the CBD/Parramatta and ‘the rest of the city’.

*“The geographical bias and privilege across the city, and the lack of diversity of people in the decision-making seats and decision-making places across the city is probably the single most important thing I [the CRO] always keep coming back to – that I have to keep reminding myself about in order to change what I am doing. We could be bolder about a whole range of issues but we also need to go back and make sure we are actually relevant and meeting the needs of the community as a whole...”*

*there is still a real problem in the way in which we can do that, it’s actually quite complicated because of the city structure, but those values of going back to really meeting baseline community needs and community safety (rather than being overridden by a political mandate of some kind) are really primary.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

These insights have tangibly manifested in changes to the way the Office goes about its work. In relation to understand that existing (inequitable) norms around the tone and geographical balance in the collaboration space across metro Sydney weren’t working:

*“We learnt the value of diversity early on and have remained super vigilant about championing diversity in all the different sectors and layers [of government] in events, so that people are meeting each other, connecting by virtue of being in the room with others they would not normally be together with.” (Interviewee - Resilient Sydney Office)*

#### **4.4 Use of strategic learning**

Cabaj suggests the development and use of strategic learning is the cornerstone of effective systems change efforts, and an outcome in and of itself. He notes that ‘strategic learning is even more important once you realise that it is possibly the only outcome in a system change [effort] that social innovators and evaluators can control’ (p7, 2019).

On this basis, it is pertinent to not only capture what has and is being learnt through the implementation of Resilient Sydney, but how well those learnings have been applied. As outlined above, the Resilient Sydney Office has been able to articulate a wide range of insights. More importantly, it has provided numerous tangible examples of how those insights have shaped the way the Office ‘shows up’ in its role as a backbone organisation, and how approaches have been adapted to better effect the change that Resilient Sydney is seeking to achieve.

## 5 What next

This section is divided into two parts: first, a set of recommendations for short-medium-term changes that respond to the program strengths and challenges described within this report, and are pitched at the operational level; and second, a summary of the implications of the evaluation findings that point to strategic matters for consideration. These considerations would ideally guide decisions about how the Resilient Sydney agenda should be progressed into the future.

### Operational recommendations

The evaluation findings identify several opportunities for the Resilient Sydney Office to broaden its reach and increase its impact, which are reflected in the following recommendations.

#### 1. Continue doing the things that are working:

- Building a robust evidence base and making data available to stakeholders through initiatives such as the Resilient Sydney Platform
- Maintaining the focus on addressing disjointed metropolitan governance and driving systemic change
- Facilitating collaboration and encouraging best practice
- Building capacity of people and organisations to understand and address resilience, including by continuing to define and mainstream the concept

2. **Increase Resilient Sydney's visibility** by better communicating its successes and learnings, so that other organisations and communities can learn from its experience as well as to increase support and engagement among current stakeholders and potential partners.

3. **Develop a plan for engaging the business sector** in line with the original actions identified in the Strategy (modifying as needed to reflect what has been learnt from the implementation to date).

The Office's ability to implement the above recommendations may be constrained by resource limitations and other issues that are addressed within the following subsection.

### Strategic considerations

#### Key implications

The results workshop conducted with the Steering Committee identified several key implications from the evaluation findings, which are relevant for the future direction and form of Resilient Sydney. These are:

- The strong foundations Resilient Sydney has built are **'an asset that needs to be protected'**.
- Key state agencies have changed their foci significantly (at least partly due to Resilient Sydney's work), and Resilience NSW has been established. This raises questions about **Resilient Sydney's future role in relation to these agencies**.
- **Soft power and staying small can be strengths**. While the Resilient Sydney Office cannot compel action, it has been able to drive action at many levels through its highly effective approach. The Office's agility, leadership and ability to bridge political and other divides have been critical, and there is a risk that having greater legislative or other 'hard' power could undermine these strengths.

- **The current funding model and operating structure present both challenges and opportunities.** While resource constraints limit the scope of work the Office can take on, the fact that it derives funding from members and not from a single granting or statutory body promotes agency and agility. The Office has been able to pivot and adapt as it learns about what works (and doesn't). Should the Office remain small and agile it will need to be strategic about what it takes on, and how it partners with others to leverage resources and positional power.
- The global experience suggests that when organisations have soft power, knowledge and tools as their foundations **it is important to structure networks in ways that create recognition and credibility, and support longevity** – for example, by requiring members to appoint resilience roles and capacity building programs as a condition of membership, as Resilient Houston has done.

In responding to these implications, the Steering Committee may wish to explore how Resilient Sydney should be resourced and governed and what its priorities should be in the medium to longer term. The 'matters for consideration' listed below could be used to guide this process – for example, as the basis for an options paper.

The issues are presented sequentially, in that the response to each should inform the next.

### Matters for consideration

1. Clarify Resilient Sydney's **unique value proposition** for each of its primary stakeholder groups:
  - Consider how the value proposition differs for (potential) members, and (potential) partners.
2. In line with the value propositions, identify **core principles** to guide decisions about Resilient Sydney's future focus:
  - Consider the trade-off between maintaining agility and increasing resourcing and positional power.
3. Clarify Resilient Sydney's **longer-term role** in relation to each of its value propositions:
  - Identify the current priorities that should continue
  - Determine activities/actions that should be included or prioritised more highly (for example, engaging the business sector; communicating Resilient Sydney's outcomes and insights).
4. Identify a **resourcing model** for Resilient Sydney, based on the value propositions and agreed longer-term role for Resilient Sydney:
  - Determine the level of resourcing needed to deliver on the agreed priorities
  - Determine the various funding model options, and the strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks associated with each.

## 6 References

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Kania, J, Kramer, M and Senge, P (2018) *The Water of Systems Change*, FSG.

Rodin, J (2014) *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where Things Go Wrong*. PublicAffairs, U.S.

Resilient Sydney (2018). *Resilient Sydney Strategy*, City of Sydney.



# Appendix 1: Survey

## Preamble

Resilient Sydney has contracted Clear Horizon Consulting to conduct an evaluation of the work of the Resilient Sydney Office and the Resilient Sydney Strategy in enabling a systems approach to city resilience.

To inform this evaluation, you are invited to participate in a survey about your perspectives and experience in attending and/or participating in Resilient Sydney activities.

This survey will take between 10 to 15 minutes. The first set of questions help us understand how you engaged with the work of Resilient Sydney, which is followed by a short answer question about what you have experienced or observed resulting from your engagement with Resilient Sydney. The final set of questions ask you to rate on a scale, how your engagement with Resilient Sydney activities have influenced you, your work or your organisation.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and all answers will remain confidential. The information you provide will remain anonymous and be kept confidential on a secure server. The responses you provide will be clustered with other responses for analysis and used to inform an evaluation report that may be made publicly available. By continuing with the survey, you are consenting to the use of the information provided by you in this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact Clear Horizon ([nathan@clearhorizon.com.au](mailto:nathan@clearhorizon.com.au)). If you have any questions about the work of Resilient Sydney, please contact the Resilient Sydney Office, ([SBailey1@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SBailey1@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)).

## Demographic information

The first set of questions are about how you engaged with the work of Resilient Sydney.

1. Which of the following Resilient Sydney activities have you attended/participated in? (Pick all that are relevant)

### Resilient Sydney Activities

- **Resilience Ambassadors/LEMOS** (Action 2 - Network metropolitan practitioners for community agency)
- **Metropolitan Practitioners Engagement Network** (Action 2 - Network metropolitan practitioners for community agency)
- **Active Transport Network** (Action 3 - collaborate for cross-city active transport)
- **Resilient Cities Network (RCN)** (Action 35 - learn and share with other cities through the 100 Resilient Cities Network)
- **Cool Suburbs** (Action 9 - Policy and action to cool homes and streets)
- **Investment in resilient buildings** (Action 10 - Develop investment in resilient buildings, assets, precincts and cities)
- **Resilient Sydney Platform** (Action 13 - Measure metropolitan carbon emission and report on progress. The Resilient Sydney Platform)
- **Social Cohesion** (Action 16 - monitor metropolitan social cohesion and wellbeing)
- **Neighbour Day campaign** (Action 18 - support communities to know their neighbours)

- **Get Prepared campaign** (Action 23 - Get prepared - 10,000 ready Sydneysiders)
- **Disaster Preparedness Program** (Action 24 - Pilot disaster preparedness program for Councils)
- **Resilient Sydney Steering Committee** (Action 32 - maintain and support the Resilient Sydney Office)
- **Mayoral Roundtable/ General Manager Forum events** (Action 1 - shocks and stresses managed through planning for growth)
- **Presentations at conferences** or events by Resilient Sydney Office staff (Action 31 - engage with 100 organisations in the Sydney Resilience Commitment)
- **Meetings or workshops** with the Resilient Sydney Office (Action 8: develop skills for equity)
- Read or reviewed the **Resilient Sydney Strategy** (2018)

2. In which of the following sectors do you work? [Select from the list]

Community	Business	Council	State Government
	<i>Please select your sector</i>	<i>Please select your role (Select all that apply)</i>	<i>Please select your agency or department</i>
Community member Community Sector/NGOs	Property Insurance Banking Infrastructure Health Education Professional Services Industrial Emergency Services Utilities Other (please describe)	Resilience Ambassador LEMO (Local Emergency Management Officer) Communications team member ROC in Sydney GM/CEO Mayor Councillor Platform user – Resilient Sydney Other (please describe)	Resilience NSW Transport for NSW Infrastructure NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Multicultural NSW Department Premier and Cabinet Department of Communities and Justice Greater Sydney Commission NSW Police NSW Health Other (please describe)
Federal Government	Resilient Cities	Other	
Infrastructure Australia Other (please describe)	Chief Resilience Officer of another city (global) Other global city or organisation Other (please describe)	Academic Other (please describe)	

3. What is the postcode for where you/your organisation is located?

## Short answer questions

Take a few minutes to think about what you have experienced or observed (positive or negative) as a result of engaging with or participating in Resilient Sydney.

Of these experiences and observations:

1. Which **one** has been the most significant for you? [Open Text]
2. **Why** is this particular one significant for you? [Open Text]

## Survey questionnaire

The following questions are about how the Resilient Sydney activities that you participated in influenced you, your work or your organisation.

Please indicate the level to which you agree with the following statements (1= strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree, or NA)

3. As a result of attending/participating in Resilient Sydney activities:

a. I have/my organisation has a better understanding of:

- the top shocks, stresses and **resilience challenges** in Sydney
- my/our **role** in managing Sydney's resilience
- the importance of managing risks in a **place-based way** that meets community/customer needs
- the **methods** I could use to address resilience challenges (e.g., tools, processes, policies, service models)
- who I could **collaborate** with to address resilience challenges (e.g. people or organisations)

b. I am/my organisation is now **engaging**:

- with local communities to **research** local risks and needs
- with local communities/customers to **create plans** for action for local resilience
- in new **collaborations** to manage resilience challenges
- with the sector I work in to manage resilience challenges

c. I have/my organisation has **taken action** to:

- embed Sydney's top shocks, stresses and resilience challenges into **organisational planning** and reporting
- include the community/ customers in **decision making** for resilience (e.g. decisions informed by community surveys, customer/user design processes or focus groups)
- include the community/ customers in **governance** of resilience priorities (e.g. community members on a sub-committee of council, community/customer reference panels, or citizen juries)
- develop **new plans**, tools, processes, policies and/or service models to address resilience challenges.
- establish **jobs/roles** that focus on resilience
- **invest** in assets or projects that focus on addressing local resilience challenges

d. I am/my organisation is seeing **signs of improvement** (in Sydney) in:

- **residents' preparedness** for emergencies
- **organisations' preparedness** for emergencies
- **social connections** between residents and/or communities
- **networks and collaborations** between organisations, for resilience
- the **inclusion** of community/customers in resilience planning

- 
- the **design** of our city to reduce the impacts of extreme weather (e.g. planting more trees to mitigate urban heat, installing more solar panels, resilient buildings and precincts)
- 

The Resilient Sydney program aims to normalise resilience thinking in decisions and practices.

4. Please rate the importance, from your perspective, of the following factors in normalising resilience thinking (1 = very important, 5 = low importance, or Don't know):

- 
- a. the **governance and leadership** provided by Resilient Sydney
  - b. **Data** provided by Resilient Sydney about Sydney's shocks, stresses and resilience challenges
  - c. the **opportunities** created by the Resilient Sydney Office **to engage** with a peer group or network to drive resilience in your sector
  - d. the **events, training and engagement** delivered by the Resilient Sydney Office
- 

## Close

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey for the evaluation of the Resilient Sydney Strategy and work of the Resilient Sydney Office.

If you have any further questions or concerns about the survey, please contact Clear Horizon ([nathan@clearhorizon.com.au](mailto:nathan@clearhorizon.com.au)). If you have any questions about the work of Resilient Sydney, please contact the Resilient Sydney Office, ([SBailey1@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SBailey1@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)).

## Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview guide

Interviewee name and role (de-identify post interview):	
Interviewee code	
Notes for interviewee	
Interview date	
Interviewed by	

### Generic preamble

Hello, my name is [interviewer name] from [Resilient Sydney/Clear Horizon Consulting].

[We have been contracted by Resilient Sydney to undertake] We are undertaking an evaluation of the work of the Resilient Sydney Office and the Resilient Sydney Strategy in enabling a systems approach to city resilience.

You have been identified by Beck Dawson as a key stakeholder to inform the evaluation.

The interview is voluntary and should take **45 to 60 minutes**. You can choose to conclude the interview at any time, and you do not have to answer a question if you do not want to

The purpose of the evaluation is to capture and assess the achievements of Resilient Sydney to date, and the insights generated over the past almost five years to improve the resilience of metro Sydney. The evaluation will inform two reports, one that focuses more on outcomes and insights for internal uses, and a public facing report that will be made available on the Resilient Sydney website. [We have contracted Clear Horizon Consulting to support us deliver this evaluation].

The information you provide will be de-identified and analysed together with other interviews to inform these reports. While you will not be identified by name in the report, identification may be possible due to your unique perspective on Resilient Sydney's work.

I will be recording this interview for my notes, with all data held on a secure and confidential server and recordings deleted once the report is finalised. After the interview, I will send you a copy of my notes for you to review and amend as you wish. **Is this ok with you? Y/N**

Do you have any questions? **Are you happy to proceed? Y/N**

Thank you again for your time.

The interview questions focus on your observations and your experience of the work of the **Resilient Sydney Office** and the implementation of the **Resilient Sydney Strategy** to improve Sydney's resilience.

## Interview introduction

*To begin, I'd like to understand a bit more about yourself.*

1. Could you please tell me about your position/ role and your involvement with Resilient Sydney?
  - a. How and why did you come into contact with the work of Resilient Sydney/ [specific RS activity]?
  - b. How long have you been engaging with RS?
  - c. Your general familiarity with the Strategy?

## Outcomes and achievements - MSC Questions

Resilient Sydney aims to strengthen Sydney's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster, while at the same time ensuring all of Sydney's communities can access opportunities to thrive.

1. During your involvement with Resilient Sydney, what changes, positive or negative, have you noticed related to this work?
  - a. Probe (from theory of change - systemic changes) - changes in resilience-improving governance and decision-making processes; policies, legislation, regulation, and service models; investment; and connections.
2. Of these changes, which one do you feel is the most significant?
3. Tell me a bit more about this change:
  - a. What was it like before the change happened?
  - b. What is it like now?
  - c. What do you think were the causes of this change?
  - d. What do you expect this change to mean into the future?
4. Why do you feel this change is the most significant (*i.e. why did you pick this change*)? / Why is this change more significant than the other changes you listed out?

## Resilient Sydney Office and RS Strategy

The next series of questions are about the work of the RS Office specifically, and the RS Strategy.

The Resilient Sydney Office has a specific role - to catalyse changes that improve Sydney's resilience. This role includes:

- *Facilitating connections and collaborations across Sydney, undertaking engagement and providing training and capacity building – all to improve the understanding, capacity and processes to address place-based risk,*
- *Providing robust, relevant and useful data, and*
- *Neutral, visible and persuasive leadership.*



1. From your perspective, what is the Resilient Sydney Office **doing well** in relation to its role as a catalyst for change?
  - a. What is it doing less well?
  - b. On a scale of 1-5, overall, how well is the Resilient Sydney Office fulfilling its role as a catalyst for change? (5 - Very well; 4 – Well; 3 – Adequate; 2 – Poor; 1 Very poorly; or Don't know)
  - c. Why did you give that rating?
2. From your perspective, in what ways is the Resilient Sydney strategy **working well**? And why?
  - a. In what ways is it not working so well? And why?
  - b. On a scale of 1-5, overall, how well is the Resilient Sydney Strategy (not office) effecting the understanding, capacity and processes to address place-based risk across metro Sydney? (5 - Very well; 4 – Well; 3 – Adequate; 2 – Poor; 1 Very poorly; or Don't know)
  - c. Why did you give that rating?

### Questions for steering committee members

1. How important has metropolitan scale willingness and political support, and alignment of funding and other resources been for the Resilient Sydney program?
2. What is being learnt about governing resilience, including the role of different actors in the system?
3. How effectively is the Resilient Sydney program responding to the current understanding of the system?

### Looking forward

1. How could the implementation of Resilient Sydney be improved?
2. What needs to happen next to improve Sydney's resilience?
3. Any closing remarks you would like to make?

### Closing

*In closing, would you willing for us to contact you again if we would like to discuss anything further that we covered today?*

*Thank you for your time and your comments, they have been most useful.*

*I will write up my notes from today's interviews and send them to you for your review and for your records. If you would like to amend anything you have mentioned today or would no longer like your comments used in this evaluation, please don't hesitate to get in touch.*

*Thanks again, goodbye.*