

Community Strategic Plan 2030—2050





Kim Healey, *Jagun* (detail), 2022

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Front cover images (from top left to right):

Sydney Streets, Pyrmont

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

George Street Light Rail

Photo: Adam Hollingworth / City of Sydney

Bara Judy Watson (2021)

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Green Square Library, Zetland

Photo: Jessica Lindsay / City of Sydney

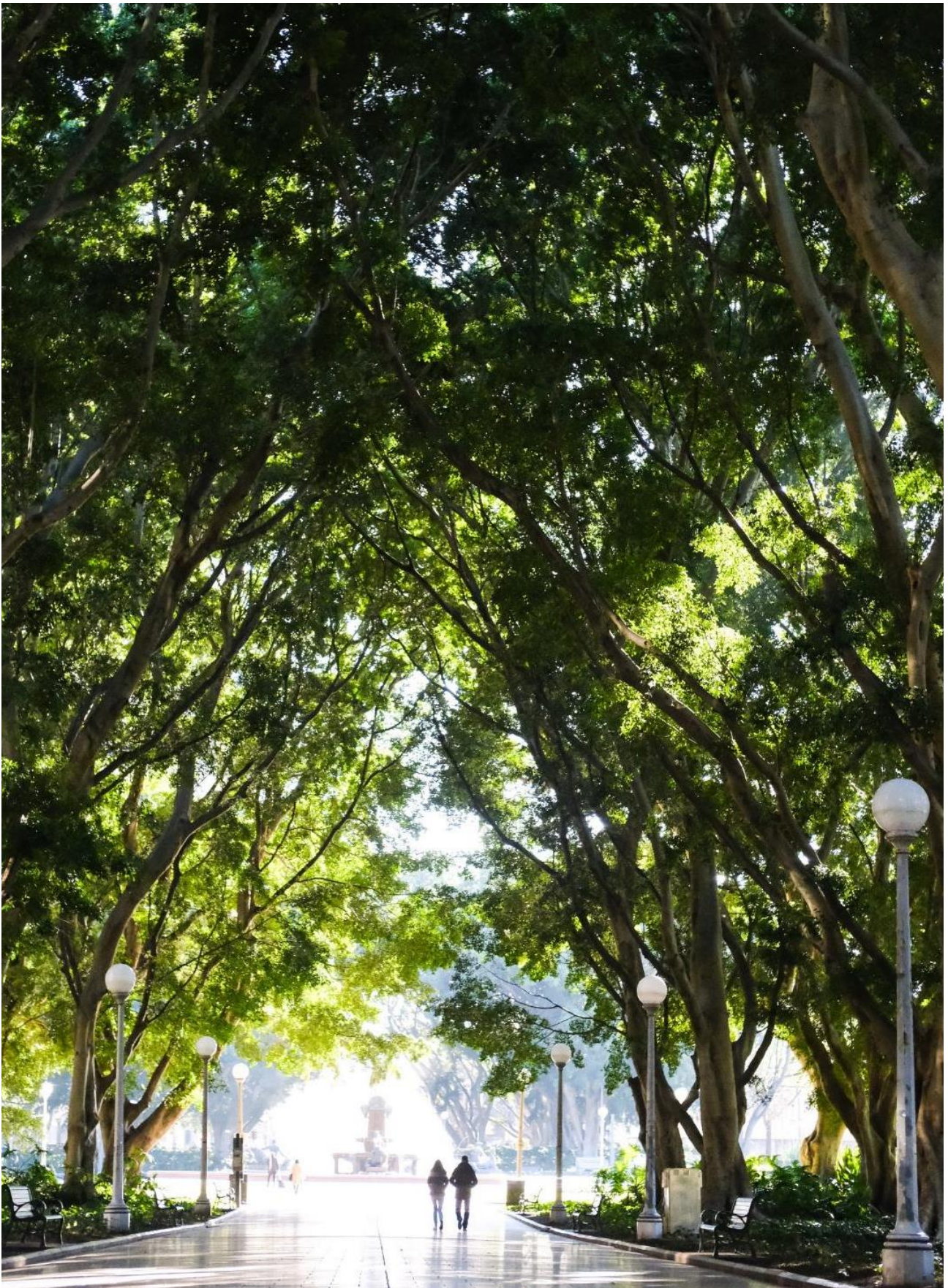


Image: Hyde Park
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Message from Lord Mayor Clover Moore

Successful cities create a clear long-term vision and develop plans to achieve it. By looking to the future and aligning common goals, businesses are confident to invest, all levels of government work together on providing essential infrastructure and services, ensuring the economy and local communities thrive.

That is what we've done in Sydney. When I became Lord Mayor in 2004, we set out to create a long-term plan to reflect the shared goals of our communities. After extensive community consultation and research and working with many of the world's best urban thinkers and strategists, we adopted Sustainable Sydney 2030 in 2008.

It set out ambitious climate, economic, social and cultural goals. It has shaped everything we've done at the City of Sydney, including reducing emissions by 26% and embarking on an ambitious greening program.

George Street's transformation into a pedestrian boulevard with light rail – an idea many thought impossible – is now complete. It's changed how people get around and experience the city while creating space for outdoor dining.

Light rail should be rolled out further. A line is needed down Parramatta Road and through to Green Square, where we have invested \$1.3 billion in public infrastructure to create a new town square and unlock \$13 billion in private development. We have created a liveable neighbourhood for today's residents and those to come in future decades.

Our city's productivity, liveability and sustainability has been transformed, and we must continue this work. So, we extended our long-term vision and set the course to 2050.

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision responds to all that we heard from a comprehensive and award-winning engagement program that included residents, businesses, workers and visitors to our area.

We heard that we need to continue our environmental leadership, that support for a future focused and innovative economy is important, and that an affordable and inclusive city which welcomes everyone is imperative. We also heard that culture and creativity are essential, alongside increased greenery and spaces for people to connect, and that we need to provide adequate walking, cycling and public transport links. The community expects this work is carried out by good governance and stewardship.

This community strategic plan is a crucial guide for implementing our renewed vision. It will be followed by more detailed strategies and plans and importantly, the long-term financial plan for the City of Sydney.

I am honoured to lead a city that accelerates climate action and prioritises creativity, culture and a more just and inclusive society – one with capacity to adapt and thrive. I am proud of this plan – the community's plan – which guides all we do to ensure the future success of Sydney.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney

Message from the CEO Monica Barone

We've been working toward the sustainable development of our city since 2008 when we adopted Sustainable Sydney 2030. As the City of Sydney's chief executive officer during this time, I'm proud of all we've achieved for our communities.

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision builds on those achievements and sets out the vision for our city over the coming decades. This vision expresses the values of our communities and their aspirations. It reflects the results of a comprehensive, award-winning community engagement program. It's informed by global and local trends, and our analysis of the latest data and scientific information to set our climate targets.

This community strategic plan sets out how we'll implement and achieve our renewed vision for the city on behalf of our communities.

As a leading city government, it's essential we're transparent and hold ourselves to account for the commitments we make on your behalf. We've set 10 ambitious targets against which we'll measure and report our progress. In each of our 10 strategic directions we've articulated the outcomes we'll set out to achieve by 2050, including the measures we'll use to show our progress along the way. We'll also continue to report on broader measures of community wellbeing.

Our targets respond to your aspirations for a city that is an environmental leader, responding to the climate emergency. A city where resilience is embedded, and our communities are connected and inclusive. A city that is also prosperous, culturally alive and vibrant – one where everyone has an opportunity to share in its success.

Achieving this vision calls for commitment and action from all of us. The actions we take through partnerships with organisations and as individuals, will help realise this shared vision for our city to 2050.

My role as CEO is to ensure the City of Sydney provides the governance and stewardship required to meet our commitments and the needs and expectations of our residents, businesses and visitors, now and in the future. This requires a proactive approach in connecting and coordinating local partnerships to address complex social issues, which demands collaboration between many stakeholders. We play an important role in these partnerships by bringing together community members, various levels of government, the private sector and community organisations.

As a local government organisation we're always looking to improve how we engage with and support our communities. This means continuously evaluating and refining our efforts to ensure we're not only meeting current needs but also building a foundation for future success. Alongside the services we provide, we want to create an environment where partnerships thrive, ensuring the diverse needs of our communities are met in a holistic and effective way. These collaborative efforts will better position our city to meet the evolving challenges of our time and make the City of Sydney a more inclusive, resilient and vibrant place for everyone.

In a changing and uncertain environment, our work to ensure the City of Sydney is a strong, capable and financially sustainable organisation has never been more important. This foundation underpins Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision, which we aim to achieve through this community strategic plan on behalf of our communities.



Monica Barone PSM
Chief Executive Officer

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 2011 – as part of the Eora Journey project we committed to fund and install 7 artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in public areas. It's part of our commitment to celebrate the living cultures of First Nations peoples.
- 2015 – we adopted our first Innovate reconciliation action plan in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of our deep commitment to reconciliation.

- 2016 – we adopted the 10-year Eora Journey economic development plan.
- 2020 – the Stretch reconciliation action plan built on our success and extended our actions. It has led to increases in employment of Aboriginal peoples, spending with Indigenous businesses and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning activities for all employees.
- 2024 – we opened the local Aboriginal knowledge and culture centre at 119 Redfern Street, completing another project from our Eora Journey commitments. This provides a place for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gather, share and support their needs.

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



Welcome to Redfern, Reko Rennie in collaboration with young local artists (2016)

Photo: Adam Hollingworth / City of Sydney

Inclusion and equity statement

Diverse communities live, work in and visit Sydney. The local community values and respects the diversity of these cultures, communities and experiences, as does the City of Sydney.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of this local area are valued.

Sydney's multicultural society and the many languages, traditions, religious and spiritual practices of the people who call the city home are valued.

Together we value the range of identities, perspectives, experiences and lifestyles of our communities. They include older and young people, people with disability and individuals with diverse political beliefs and perspectives. People of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex people are respected.

Together the contributions made by all individuals to the city's diversity strengthens the city.

The City of Sydney champions human rights and people's right to self-determination, as we strive for inclusion.

We demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion by respecting the dignity and worth of all people, equitably treating communities and employees, and fairly providing services, facilities and public spaces.

We want to promote a society where self-determination and inclusive participation is valued and to demonstrate these principles in all that we do.

Our work with communities strives to eliminate discrimination and mitigate disadvantage, to actively remove barriers to inclusive participation and to promote relationships that are based on understanding and respect.

Our communities expressed the same aspirations when we engaged them on the vision for the city to 2050. The Citizens Jury recommended concepts that included the active participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the governance of the city in an embedded and respectful way.

Our response is a more equitable and inclusive city. We want the city to be one where everyone has an equal chance in life and the opportunity to realise their potential.

Cities that are more equal, are cities that thrive.



Image on right: Celebrating Wear it Purple Day
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

The plan addresses 4 key questions for each of our 10 strategic directions:

1. Where are we now?

For each direction we set out community priorities and aspirations, the current situation in our city, the issues affecting our communities and why we need to act.

The plan identifies 7 global trends affecting cities, and Sydney specifically, that we respond to in this plan.

2. Where do we want to be in future?

Each direction includes a section on 2050 outcomes that describe the future our communities aspire to.

3. How will we get there?

The plan also identifies supporting strategies for each direction. Each of these strategies sets out detailed actions to help achieve the community's priorities and aspirations.

4. How will we know we've achieved our goals?

Ten overall targets will measure the transformation of the city, with progress reported in the annual report. Progress for each objective will also be measured and reported every 4 years in the state of our city report.

Supporting plans and strategies

The City of Sydney will work towards meeting community priorities and aspirations through plans and strategies developed within the integrated planning and reporting framework.

The delivery program identifies the actions Council will take over the next 4 years that support the community strategic plan outcomes. The operational plan is an annual plan with more details of individual activities. It includes the City of Sydney revenue policy for rates and annual charges, the fees and charges schedule, and other relevant budget information.

The long-term resourcing strategy ensures the City of Sydney has adequate resources to achieve the planned outcomes it's responsible for, while maintaining the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The resourcing strategy has 5 components:

- Long term financial plan: a 10-year plan that identifies current and future financial capacity of Council to act on the aspirations of the community strategic plan, including providing high quality services, facilities and infrastructure to the community.
- People strategy: identifies the City of Sydney's current and future workforce needs. It ensures the workforce has the capacity and capability to create the outcomes in the community strategic plan.
- Community asset management plan: ensures appropriate standards for maintenance and renewal of key assets under City of Sydney care and control. This plan provides details of the status and resource requirements of these assets.
- Information and technology strategy: sets the information and communication technology direction and priorities for the City of Sydney, which are aligned with the community strategic plan, community needs, and government information and data policies. The plan guides decision making, priorities and investment.
- Community engagement strategy and community participation plan: a framework for how the City of Sydney consults diverse communities, collaborates, involves and empowers people to take part in shaping the future of their city. The community participation plan includes information on strategic planning, development assessments and how to engage with Council on land use planning matters.

Roles and responsibilities

The community strategic plan sets out community priorities and aspirations for the local area. It will take everyone working together to achieve the desired outcomes and our targets.

The City of Sydney has a critical role in delivering projects, programs and services that support the community strategic plan. We'll work with a range of partners across business, government, civil society and community organisations to reach our targets and achieve the desired outcomes. We'll enter formal partnerships, sponsorships, agreements and memorandums of understanding as needed, and we may set up less formal arrangements and collaborations at other times. Many other levels of government and organisations are responsible for delivering projects, programs and services that contribute to our outcomes and targets.

Reference and advisory groups will provide specialist advice to guide this work.

The City of Sydney's roles under this plan include:

Leader	We seek to understand the underlying values of our communities and their needs. We put in place policies and the financial and governance frameworks to ensure we act ethically as stewards of this city.
Provider	We provide a range of infrastructure, facilities, programs and services for the benefit of the city and our communities.
Convenor and facilitator	We bring together all the forces essential for the success of the city, including governments, civil society, businesses and academia to achieve outcomes with and for our communities.
Planner	We use our professional expertise in city planning and program and service provision to carry out research and collaborate with communities and stakeholders to develop and evaluate ways to resolve identified issues.
Thought leader	We commission and publish thought leadership and research on economic, social, environmental and cultural issues and develop solutions relevant to the city and our communities.
Capacity builder	We work with communities and community organisations, building connections and strengthening their capacity to respond to their needs.
Advocate	We act as an advocate on behalf of our communities, giving voice to their needs and aspirations. We call on other levels of government and business for policy and regulatory reform as well as changes to service provision for the benefit of the city and our communities.
Networker	We engage in local, national and global networks to share and develop expertise in urban issues.
Funder	We provide funding to support innovation, contribute to collaborative initiatives and provide support to communities and organisations.
Role model	We lead by example in how we run our organisation, manage our assets and engage our employees.
Communicator	We provide timely, accurate, inclusive and inspiring information to the people involved in our programs, projects and services, and we engage them in conversations about the work we're doing.



Green Square markets

Photo: Anna Kucera / City of Sydney

Seven global trends

As we plan for the city in the decades to 2050, the world is changing. These changes can be abrupt shocks, such as pandemics, bushfires and international conflicts. They can also be gradual changes over decades, such as increasing social inequality and climate variability.

In developing this plan, we considered 7 global trends that will have a considerable influence on the future of cities, particularly Sydney.

1. Climate emergency
2. Housing affordability and cost of living
3. Density and demographic change
4. Rapid advances in technology
5. Trust, social polarisation and truth
6. Social isolation and connectedness
7. Economic transition

These trends will impact our environment, our economy and how we all live and interact with each other. While there are challenges with each trend, there are also opportunities.

Our response to these dynamic issues – through our strategic directions – aims to ensure our communities can face the challenges and share the benefits of the opportunities ahead.

1. Climate emergency

The United Nations climate reports state that human influence on the climate is clear, and recent emissions of greenhouse gases from human-related activities are the highest in history.

Since 2023, global temperatures have already reached 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The Glasgow Climate Pact¹ outlines that limiting global heating to 1.5°C requires deep cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 and reaching net zero by around 2050.

Australians are already experiencing climate change, with more frequent and intense droughts, bushfires, floods, heatwaves and storms. While climate change is impacting our weather systems, it's also affecting our ability to produce food and how we live alongside other species.

To restore a safe climate where future generations can survive and flourish, we need to respond with urgent, unprecedented action.

Cities are a critical part of the solution. More than half the world's population already lives in urban areas. By 2050 this could increase to two thirds. Our cities now generate 80% of all gross domestic product alongside 75% of carbon emissions from final energy use.

If managed well, the transition to zero-carbon, climate-resilient cities will provide economic opportunities and improve our quality of life while also addressing the global climate emergency.

¹ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_10_add1_adv.pdf

2. Housing affordability and cost of living

Recent decades have seen a decline in housing affordability across global cities. There are many factors affecting access to housing and goods and services, such as labour markets, housing prices, supply chains and local economies.

The housing crisis has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis that saw inflation reach record highs in 2022². Recent research has found no housing in Greater Sydney is affordable to buy for someone on the NSW median income³, a trend that intensifies with proximity to Sydney's city centre. In the City of Sydney area, median weekly rent for a 2-bedroom unit rose by 32% from \$710 in 2022 to \$939 in 2024⁴.

We know unaffordability creates barriers to full participation in the social, cultural, economic and political life of a city. A high cost of living impacts the health and wellbeing of our communities by preventing access to safe housing, adequate food, daily services and technology. Those most affected include people relying on uncertain incomes, those who are unemployed or have ill-health, and people with disability or caring responsibilities. People whose incomes don't keep up with rising costs can also become displaced from their local areas and communities.

Our communities have told us they value living in neighbourhoods that are welcoming and inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds. To create a city where everyone is included and can thrive, the City of Sydney takes a leading role to advocate and tackle the city's housing challenges and cost of living pressures.

3. Density and demographic change

Cities accommodate growing populations in higher density neighbourhoods to ensure all residents have good access to open space, infrastructure and services, while protecting the environment and increasing tree canopy cover.

Sydney prides itself on being home to an incredibly diverse population. As our population grows, the demographic make-up of our communities will shift. The city has a uniquely young population with a median age of 34 and smaller average household sizes when compared to Greater Sydney.

A growing and changing population requires us to balance the needs of both current and future communities. We must ensure the qualities people value in our area are not compromised by future growth. This can be challenging when deciding on development scale, the types of activities near residences, and how to preserve heritage and neighbourhood character.

Well-designed high-density buildings and neighbourhoods play an important role in supporting changes due to population growth. High-density housing needs to be located close to transport and amenities. It also needs to incorporate good design qualities such as access to green space, natural light and good ventilation.

These principles of good design ensure our communities retain their sense of connection to place in high-quality, liveable neighbourhoods. The right policy settings will ensure the desirability of these liveable neighbourhoods doesn't undermine access to diverse housing options. When these factors are balanced, new development meets current and future community needs.

² OECD (2023), "Confronting the cost-of-living and housing crisis in cities", *OECD Regional Development Papers*, No. 49, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/7a6008af-en>.

³ <https://www.uts.edu.au/news/business-law/sydney-housing-unaffordable-median-full-time-income#:~:text=New%20research%20suggests%20Sydney's%20housing,until%20at%20least%20the%202030s.&text=Having%20a%20stable%20and%20regular,according%20to%20a%20new%20stud>

⁴ Housing Audit 2024, available at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/research-reports/city-monitor-reports>

4. Rapid advances in technology

Extraordinary technological advances will continue to impact our communities over the coming decades. Technology has great potential to enrich and improve people's lives, but also comes with risks and can represent a danger when misused. It can quickly evolve and have long-lasting positive and negative impacts. It can significantly shift economies towards their sustainability and resilience goals, but it can also worsen the 'digital divide'⁵ between those who have access and opportunity and see the benefit of digital engagement, and those who don't.

For example, recent advances such as artificial intelligence have improved efficiency in the home and workplace by automating and simplifying tasks. But for creative industries, generative AI challenges the way original creative content is valued. And for the broader community, generative AI is making it harder to tell what is fact or fiction online, leading to rising concerns about misinformation.

We also know our communities are concerned about the privacy and security of their information. When advancing technologies are abused, the potential for data leaks and scams represents a danger to the community, especially those who have lower digital literacy, such as older people and people from multicultural communities.

Concerns about emerging technologies are held across our communities – around their safety online and their ability to share in the benefits and opportunities technology offers. Digitally excluded people miss out on social and economic benefits that connectivity provides. While we don't yet know what the next major advances will be, we need to remain responsive to changes and be prepared to support our communities to safely and confidently engage with new technologies.

5. Trust, social polarisation and truth

Around the world, the distribution of power between governments, businesses and communities continues to shift. Research shows that communities expect more transparency in the way governments and businesses operate, with clearer governance and recognition of how decisions that impact communities are made.

Power imbalance weakens social resilience, erodes trust in institutions, political leaders, and one another. In a highly political and consumable media environment, divisions based on culture, economics and political affiliation can deepen due to the way complex issues are framed. These conditions create an environment where populist ideologies and polarisation can spread within and between communities. Research⁶ shows that social cohesion contributes to social resilience – when disaster strikes, communities recover faster by working together. International movements and conflicts impact our communities, prompting us to consider our role in the global society. While they can fuel negative attitudes and discrimination, they can also highlight the resilience of those fighting for justice and equality, inspiring local progress.

In today's world, truth is increasingly contested. Misinformation presents a real risk to evidence-based policy making and undermines trust in good governance and leadership.

The World Economic Forum identified "erosion of social cohesion and societal polarisation" as the 5th most significant global risk in 2023.

⁵ The Australian Digital Inclusion Index measures digital inclusions across the domains of accessibility, affordability and digital ability. <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/>

⁶ https://globalaccesspartners.org/GAP_IIERA_Trust_and_Resilience_Report_Feb21.pdf

To authentically advocate for truth in the decisions we make now, we must address inaccuracies in recordings of the past.

Truth-telling is crucial for healing, reducing division and rebuilding trust. In many situations, understanding and sharing the truth is key to creating a future that includes all Australians even when those truths are difficult to share. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, truth-telling is especially important to build a future based on respect, genuine engagement and shared responsibility for the land.

6. Social isolation and connectedness

Globally and locally, health has improved in recent decades when measured in life expectancy. But inequality still exists in more nuanced health outcomes. Amid a mental health crisis, there is greater awareness around how health risks affect quality of life as well as length of life. Social isolation and loneliness are considered one such health risk by the World Health Organization. When people are isolated and don't have social or community connections, they're more likely to have poor health outcomes⁷, such as heart disease and dementia, and lower quality of life, including poor mental health.

Some Australians experience higher levels of loneliness than others, including young people, parents, older people and people who live alone. Certain community groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people of diverse sexualities and genders, and migrants were also found to experience higher levels of loneliness compared to national averages⁸.

Responses to our 2023 wellbeing survey show that 3 in 5 residents in our communities strongly identify with the places where they live, but there's also an opportunity to support our residents to feel more connected with their neighbours and the broader community.

Local community organisations and our community facilities such as libraries, community centres and parks, provide opportunities for people to connect and build relationships. The design of buildings and public spaces in our local area also influences a sense of belonging. We support community organisations and create key infrastructure and spaces to meet the diverse needs of our communities. We also advocate for good social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes across all levels of government that address social isolation and create community connection.

7. Economic transition

City economies are constantly changing, but major shocks like the pandemic force us to reflect on how these changes impact different communities.

The pandemic highlighted shifts in how we work, both individually and globally. While remote work became more common, giving some workers more flexibility, those in the gig economy faced less job security. This has particularly affected priority communities, worsening their working conditions. The pandemic also revealed our dependence on global supply chains that are subject to disruption by disasters, geopolitical shifts and resource shortages.

⁷ <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/social-isolation-and-loneliness>

⁸ <https://www.groundswellfoundation.com.au/post/connections-matter-a-report-on-the-impacts-of-loneliness-in-australia>

Economic change also brings significant opportunities. While cities still have many businesses in their central areas, they're now also being used more by visitors and locals who aren't there for work. These changes are encouraging cities to rethink how people's experiences can make their city more appealing to visitors, skilled workers and investors.

And at an industry level, the path to a more sustainable future is creating opportunities for new and growing industries in a greener economy. A green economy will see many sectors innovating and adapting to different ways of doing business.

The workforce and consumers are impacted differently. The workforce community is experiencing opportunities to upskill, get new jobs, spend more time with family by working flexibly, and build local wealth. And the consumer community is seeing their values reflected in sustainable business and social enterprise, and their neighbourhoods prosper as centres of local economic and cultural activity.



UTS Tech Lab, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Photo: Anna Zhu / UTS

Our national and international commitments and targets

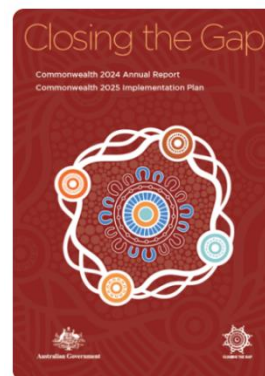
We're part of some of the biggest international agreements on a better future for our planet and people. The aspirations and targets in this community strategic plan align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and leading global agreements between national and city governments on climate, sustainable development and resilience.

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The City of Sydney is committed to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap⁹ and taking an active role in achieving its 17 socio-economic outcomes and 4 priority reforms, including one NSW-specific priority reform¹⁰.

The 5 priority reform areas are:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision making
2. Building the community-controlled sector
3. Transforming government organisations
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level
5. Employment, business growth and economic prosperity.



Priority reform areas are identified across relevant outcomes within our 10 strategic directions. The aim is to ensure our organisation:

- is culturally safe and responsive
- improves access to locally relevant data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- strengthens pathways to education and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- builds the local community-controlled sector

⁹ *Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan*, featuring artwork by Jordan Lovegrove, Ngarrindjeri

¹⁰ https://www.lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Misc/Closing_the_Gap_Factsheet_for_Local_Councils.pdf

- empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making authority with governments.

C40 Cities

In 2007 the City of Sydney joined the C40 Cities network of nearly 100 cities representing just under 600 million people and 22% of the global economy. These cities collaborate, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change.

C40 cities are committed to using an inclusive, science-based and collaborative approach to cut their fair share of emissions in half by 2030, help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities.

Sustainable development goals



In 2015 Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's sustainable development goals. The 17 goals provide a global roadmap for all countries to work towards a better world for current and future generations.

The goals aim to balance economic prosperity with reducing inequalities and addressing issues related to biodiversity loss and the impacts of climate change. They have 169 targets against which each country reports and measures their progress.

Australia has much to work on if we're to meet the 2030 targets. The Transforming Australia: SDG Progress Report 2024 stated Australia is only on track to meet around 30% of its 2030 targets – with 34% even going backwards¹¹.

Compared to other nations in the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, Australia has made promising advancements in reducing the gender gap in superannuation, wages and women in parliament (goal 5), renewable energy (goal 7) and greenhouse gas emissions (goal 13). The nation is also doing well on average life expectancy (goal 3), tertiary education attainment (goal 4), average per capita water consumption (goal 6), levels of air pollution (goal 11) and feelings of safety (goal 16).

But increasing inequality threatens the wellbeing of many Australians and the nation's progress on goals 1 (poverty), 2 (zero hunger) and 10 (reduced inequalities). Wealth disparity continues to grow in Australia, with the highest 20% of households holding 63% of the nation's wealth in 2020. Australia's environment continues to raise significant sustainability challenges, with continued declines in threatened species (goal 15), and worsening impacts from natural disasters (goal 13). Australia is falling behind peer nations when it comes to the circular economy and efficient resource use (goal 12).

¹¹ https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3898900/MSDI-Transforming-Australia-SDG-Progress-Report-2024.pdf

These goals need considerably more work alongside Australian Government and NSW Government policy changes if we're to achieve the targets by 2030.

The City of Sydney sees achieving these goals as the collective responsibility of business, civil society and all levels of government. Like our previous plan, this community strategic plan aligns with the international sustainable development goals.

Through local actions, we can make a positive contribution to the development of the city and its communities, in line with Australia's global commitment.

Resilient Cities Network and Resilient Sydney

In 2015 Sydney became a member of the Resilient Cities Network, formerly the 100 Resilient Cities initiative, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation. It includes 98 member cities in 40 countries that work with city-based chief resilience officers, mobilising communities, city governments, urban practitioners and partners to provide impact-driven resilience strategies and projects.

The City of Sydney is a member of Resilient Sydney and hosts the Resilient Sydney Office.

Resilient Sydney is a collaborative governance network of all 33 Greater Sydney councils, which is funded by them. Its regional steering committee includes representatives from Greater Sydney councils and the NSW Government. The work of the network is guided by the Resilient Sydney Strategy.

The first strategy was adopted in 2018. The current strategy, Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025–2030 is based on comprehensive community engagement and resilience risk assessment carried out in 2023/24. This was funded under the joint Australian Government – NSW Government national partnership agreement on disaster risk reduction.

This community strategic plan has drawn from the strategy to set the direction for the City of Sydney's actions to build resilience of our local area and its networks, infrastructure, assets and communities.

Sydney's major acute shocks

International crisis

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Economic crisis |  Cyberattack |
|  War & conflict |  Disease outbreak |

Natural hazards

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Heatwaves |  Storms |
|  Bushfires |  Coastal hazards |
|  Flooding | |

Critical infrastructure failure

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Energy |  Water |
|  Transport |  Waste |
|  Digital networks |  Shelter |

Sydney's chronic stresses

Stresses that increase vulnerability for individuals and communities relating to geography and demographics

Inequity





- | | |
|---|--|
|  Health services |  Education |
|  Housing |  Cost of living |
|  Transport | |

Wellbeing

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Mental health |  Family violence |
|  Chronic health conditions |  Social isolation & lack of community connections |
|  Racism & vilification | |

Stresses that undermine the ability of the city to function effectively and manage increasing risks

Governance

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Fragmented governance |  Environmental degradation |
|  Reducing social cohesion |  Disrupted supply chains |
|  Low trust | |

How we engaged our communities

We held more than 90 engagement activities in 2018 to 2019 to allow people to actively contribute to the development of Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision. This included:

- 5,000 people who completed an online survey
- 1,500 people participating in workshops
- 2,200 people talking to us at street pop-ups and libraries
- 300 stakeholders at a one-day summit.

Our engagement process is based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights. Throughout the engagement process, we aimed to create a robust evidence base and reach diverse communities. We sought to elevate the voices of children and young people. We wanted to build consensus for a future vision and be clear about how best to achieve this in partnership with our communities.

In a 3-phase engagement process, we captured a breadth of perspectives and explored transformative ideas. The first phase identified what our communities value. Through community sessions, surveys, pop-up activities, storytelling and workshops, we identified what was important to residents, workers, businesses, students and visitors about the future of the local area.

The second phase generated ideas through a First Nations Dialogue Forum, stakeholder's workshop, Children's Summit and Youth Summit. We also made a public call for ideas.

The third phase was setting up a Citizens Jury, made up of 43 randomly selected residents, workers and citizens from across metropolitan Sydney. Over 6 Saturdays, the jury distilled more than 2,500 ideas from the public into 8 transformative concepts that could be turned into concrete actions and carried out by 2050.

We checked in with communities again through a survey of 2,700 residents and 1,100 businesses on the impacts of the pandemic in May 2020.

We continue to engage our diverse communities on our plans to achieve the vision for Sydney in 2050. Over the past 2 years we've consulted the community extensively to develop new strategies that address key issues including resilience, climate and sustainability, economic development, cultural life, walking and access, affordable housing and food security.

We also asked people what they value most about their local area to develop local neighbourhood visions and plans. And we checked in on the wellbeing of those who live, work or study in our local area to provide current picture of everyday life in our city.

What our communities told us

The themes identified as important in our consultation on the future vision for Sydney remain constant. These include being environmentally responsive, having liveable places for people, getting around the city easily, supporting a future focused and strong local economy and lively, culturally engaged communities. In fact, concern about the impacts of climate change and the need for action has increased. There was also an increased desire to ensure there is support for vulnerable people in our communities.

From more than 13,500 pieces of feedback drawn from 27 key consultations carried out between 2022 and 2024, community priorities remain focused on several key areas. These include creating a liveable, sustainable and inclusive city that supports diverse communities, offers accessible public spaces and actively addresses the challenges posed by climate change. While we progress toward implementing specific projects and initiatives, recent consultations have provided more detailed and targeted feedback on our plans and actions designed to achieve these strategic goals.

People expressed strong support for environmental action, particularly through increased urban greenery, renewable energy initiatives and sustainable waste management practices. Community members consistently prioritised safe and accessible public spaces that foster social connections and accommodate diverse needs, from families to older adults.

Housing affordability emerged as a critical issue, with ongoing support for diverse and affordable housing options that prevent displacement and allow people from all backgrounds to live and work in Sydney. Economic resilience and innovation were also top priorities, with people advocating for a city that embraces technology and a green economy, supports local businesses and creates opportunities for emerging industries.

Culture was another significant focus, with people emphasising the importance of affordable, accessible spaces for creative expression and the celebration of Sydney's cultural diversity. There was strong support for inclusive cultural precincts, local events and the representation of diverse voices, including those from First Nations and multicultural communities.

Equity and inclusivity were recurring themes, especially in public space design and community services, where residents highlighted the need for spaces that are welcoming to all, including priority communities.

Overall, these insights reflect a community that continues to be deeply committed to a Sydney that is environmentally responsible, culturally vibrant, socially inclusive and economically resilient.

What our communities value

We worked with our communities for more than 18 months to develop the vision for Sydney in 2050. We began the process in 2018 by asking people to tell us their hopes for Sydney and what excites and concerns them about the future.

This helped us explore the high-level themes, values and issues the community sees as important. Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 shows continuing support for these values.

Overwhelmingly, our communities said they want:

1. An environmentally responsive city

Our communities want us to respond to the climate emergency through practical and accessible solutions that make the city more environmentally sustainable and responsive into the future.

This includes:

- reducing carbon emissions
- using resources sustainably, such as water
- increasing reuse, recycling, and more sustainable waste management
- sustainable urban growth, sustainable transport, green spaces and reducing car dependency to lower pollution
- hearing the voices and concerns of young people about the environment because Sydney 2050 is their future.

2. A city for people

Our communities want a safe, healthy and inclusive city that is vibrant, creative and welcoming of everyone.

This includes:

- a city that is green with trees and plants
- quality and accessible public spaces, services and events
- diverse types of housing that are affordable and prevent displacement
- a community that is connected, feels safe and inclusive
- a city with a thriving cultural life.

3. A city that moves

Our communities want integrated, sustainable and accessible transport options for everyone.

This includes:

- prioritising public transport, walking and bike riding
- accessible and reliable public transport, especially for people with disability and older people
- streets and public spaces for people with fewer cars
- a city where people can easily get to where they need to go.

4. A city with a future-focused economy

Our communities want Sydney to be a global leader in innovation, technology and green industries. People want our economic growth and prosperity to be shared by all.

This includes:

- a city optimistic about future opportunities in education, jobs, innovation and the economy
- a city with digital infrastructure that creates new jobs and allows businesses to respond to changing customer needs
- transitioning to a green economy
- ensuring economic growth benefits all sectors of society, including supporting First Nations enterprises, key workers and creatives
- strengthening the night-time economy
- young people who see the future of jobs as automated and highly connected.

5. A lively, cultural and creative city

Our communities want us to protect affordable spaces for artists to live, work and perform. People value highly how art and culture contribute to community identity, health, wellbeing and the local economy.

This includes:

- culture and heritage woven through the city
- bold ideas and a unique identity
- diverse shopping and entertainment options, with vibrant local businesses and thriving main streets
- a lively city, embracing nightlife with more late-night venues and events
- a city where locals and visitors gather for cultural experiences in public spaces
- a city with accessible and affordable spaces for artists and creative workers
- affordable and accessible entertainment options
- a city with diversity across all cultural expressions.

The community's vision for the future

Our communities support a green, global and connected city.
This is what that means.

Green

We support a sustainable future where everyone does their part to lessen their impact to the planet by reducing carbon emissions and regenerating the environment around them.

It means citizens responsibly reduce their environmental footprint by cutting what they consume, minimising waste and sharing resources.

Businesses and institutions take the lead in research, investment and innovation to remove carbon and transform our economy.

A regenerative circular economy is driven by new design and manufacturing techniques with producers taking responsibility for the life cycle of their products.

The city is naturally cooled by trees and greenery, helping support wellbeing and improving amenity.

Our collective voices and actions influence others, locally and globally.

The city and its communities adapt to be resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.

The city is planned so that housing, transport, facilities, infrastructure and open space allow people to be close to their jobs and what they need for daily life.

Global

We support our city being a leader in our region for just and sustainable growth, creativity and innovation. It has a thriving 24-hour economy and opportunities for all.

It means the real history of our country is acknowledged and truth-telling is elevated to enable us to go forward together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a true spirit of reconciliation.

Everyone in the city has an opportunity to participate in its economic, social and cultural life and reach their full potential.

Our global orientation and connections keep the city at the forefront of sustainable investment, jobs and businesses. The city is an international gateway and leading destination for talent, business and leisure visitors.

We work collaboratively to enhance Sydney's reputation as a welcoming, diverse, inclusive and safe city that works to restore its natural environment and ecosystems.

Investment and support for creativity and innovation leads to strong economic growth.

New business models diversify our economy and businesses take the lead in transforming to a zero-carbon economy.

Sustained investment in infrastructure, icons, amenities and public spaces support the city's thriving cultural life. Curiosity and experimentation are encouraged. Leadership, bold ideas and new talent are rewarded.

Smart, resilient infrastructure supports business investment and services our communities.

Business, government and communities are part of global networks and are active participants in global knowledge exchange.

Connected

Social, business, cultural and physical connections in the city allow us to reach our full potential and adapt to changes and withstand adversity. It means people look out for one another and feel safe.

Community cohesion is stronger because of our efforts to learn from, understand and connect with one another.

Communities, particularly children and young people are engaged, use their voices and actively participate in governance and decision-making processes.

People and organisations in the city are prepared for and able to recover from most situations.

Our city celebrates and strengthens its diverse, multicultural communities and everyone feels welcome.

Our lives are enhanced as our diverse communities contribute to the richness of the city's culture, where we record and share our stories, our history and our local creative achievements.

The city's distinctive local neighbourhoods provide strong focal points for community life, enriching experiences, recreation and simply coming together – all essential for health and wellbeing.

We can walk and ride around our city and enjoy good public transport connections to the rest of metropolitan Sydney.

People feel connected to their city and to one another. These connections create the capacity to adapt to change and withstand adversity.

The City of Sydney continues its commitment to lead change through partnership and collaboration with government, the private sector and local communities.



Walkers at Prince Alfred Park

Photo: Josef Nalevansky / image Cloud Pty Ltd

Ten targets to measure progress

1. **By 2035 we will achieve net zero emissions** in the City of Sydney local area.
2. **By 2050 there will be a minimum overall green cover of 40%**, including 27% tree canopy cover in our local area.
3. **By 2030 residential potable water use will be reduced to 204 litres a person a day** in the City of Sydney local area. Non-residential potable water use will be reduced by 10% from 2018/19 levels.
4. **By 2035 there will be a 15% reduction in waste generated** by each person in the local area based on 2023 levels. And by 2035 there will be **90% recycling** and recovery of residential waste, commercial and industrial waste, and construction and demolition waste, which will be maintained at that level to 2050.
5. **By 2036 there will be around 700,000 jobs** in the City of Sydney local area including 200,000 new jobs compared to 501,786 in 2017. An increasing proportion of all jobs will be secure jobs.
6. **By 2036 there will be at least 156,000 private dwellings and 17,500 non-private dwellings** in the local area that include boarding houses and student accommodation. Of the private dwellings, 7.5% will be social housing and 7.5% will be affordable rental and diverse housing with these proportions maintained into the future.
7. **By 2036 new cultural production floor space** in the City of Sydney local area will have increased **at least 40,000m²** from 1,212,900m² in 2017.
8. **By 2050 people will use public transport, walk or cycle to travel to and from work.** This includes 9 out of 10 people working in the city centre and 2 out of 3 people working in the rest of the local area.
9. **By 2030 every resident** in the local area **will be around a 10-minute walk** to what they need for daily life.
10. **By 2050 community cohesion and social interaction will have increased** in the local area. This is based on at least 75% of the local resident population feeling part of the community, 65% agreeing most people can be trusted and 90% saying they can get help from their neighbours.

Six guiding principles

This community strategic plan is centred around 6 guiding principles, based on the values expressed by our communities.



Town Hall, Sydney

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

1. We're accountable to the voices and elevate the knowledge and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The city strives to reflect the needs and aspirations of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise their rights.

We'll work to authentically strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and help build self-determining communities.

2. We respond to the climate emergency

We respond to the climate emergency by taking bold steps to reduce the city's environmental footprint and ensure we're prepared for the transition to a circular and zero carbon economy.

We plan for the sustainable growth of the city. We step lightly on the planet and support biodiversity and nature in the city.

We promote transformative change in energy generation, resource consumption, water use, transport and climate adaptation. We encourage it to be done in a way that's equitable and inclusive, with no one left behind or bearing an unfair burden because of long-term structural change to jobs and industries.

Our strategies promote climate resilience, and mitigation and adaptation. This includes emissions reduction, renewable energy and helping the community prepare for climate change. Our strategies also promote equity by ensuring communities who are impacted more by climate change are provided with the resources and opportunities to adapt to the changing climate.

3. We build the resilience of our society and economy

Sydney is a place where partnerships between government, business and communities strengthen the city.

We build resilience in our economy, communities, systems and infrastructure to respond, recover and adapt to shock events and chronic stresses. These include our energy and transport systems failing to cope with extreme weather or other events, and a lack of affordable housing and poorly constructed buildings that fail to meet current safety, quality or sustainability standards.

Among other stresses, our health services are under pressure and some vulnerable communities may be isolated or experience increasing inequity.

4. Our communities are engaged in the governance of their city

Sydney is a democratic city where people of all ages can influence decisions. People are encouraged to be connected and effective community builders.

5. We lead through stewardship and collaboration

The City of Sydney will lead by facilitating social harmony and inclusion while also acting as a steward of the environment and the economy.

In our role as steward, we're required to understand what our communities value and the values we have in common, then act in line with those shared values.

As steward of this city, we'll ensure we embrace innovation and are prepared for change by responding and adapting.

Our communities are also impacted by decisions outside our boundaries. We'll seek to work collaboratively with partners, our neighbours and all levels of government for the benefit of current and future generations.

6. Our organisation is governed responsibly and sustainably

The City of Sydney has a responsibility to balance the needs and interests of current and future generations when it makes decisions.

We'll ensure the organisation has the financial capacity to serve our communities now and in the future.

Fairness and equity, including intergenerational equity, underpin all our choices. High ethical standards, transparency, accountability and the involvement of our communities are integral to the governance of the city.



Image: *Ever Sun*, Rochelle Haley (2021). **Performers:** Angela Goh, Ivey Wawn, David Huggins, Patricia Wood and Alice Weber

Photo: Jess Maurer

Ten strategic directions

A framework for action

The following sections set out 10 strategic directions for the community strategic plan.

Each strategic direction covers:

- community priorities and aspirations
- the current situation and why we need to act
- objectives and outcomes by 2050 and how progress will be measured over time
- role of the City of Sydney and key partners
- strategies with detailed actions to support these outcomes.

The responsibility for meeting each strategic direction is shared between the City of Sydney and our partners. These roles will intersect and change under this plan over the next 25 years. Further detail on how we will achieve these strategic directions is outlined in City of Sydney strategies and plans.

The 10 strategic directions are:

1. Responsible governance and stewardship
2. A leading environmental performer
3. Public places for all
4. Design excellence and sustainable development
5. A city for walking, cycling and public transport
6. An equitable and inclusive city
7. Resilient and diverse communities
8. A thriving cultural and creative life
9. A transformed and innovative economy
10. Housing for all

How to read this document

The community strategic plan identifies the main priorities and aspirations of our communities to 2050. The City of Sydney writes this plan on behalf of the community.

Direction 2: A leading environmental performer

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

Strategic Direction

These describe the aspirational goals of the community to 2050.

2.1 The city reaches net zero emissions by 2035 with embodied carbon significantly reduced

Strategic Objective

These describe specific goals to achieve the strategic direction.

Sydney by 2050

The city is regenerative, contributing positively to the planet, society and to people's lives

Outcomes

These describe what the community imagines Sydney will look like by 2050.

Monitoring progress

City of Sydney local government area greenhouse gas emissions. Target 70% reduction by 2030 from 2006 baseline of 5,815,521 tCO₂e.

Monitoring progress

These describe how we monitor and determine if progress is being made towards the strategic objective.



Declaration of the 2024 poll

Photo: Pheobe Pratt / City of Sydney

Direction 1: Responsible governance and stewardship

Community priorities and aspirations

Our communities want to be involved in shaping their city and local neighbourhoods, and for the city to be well-governed. Local communities want transparent and accountable government.

They expect in future to have more opportunities to participate in government decisions. They hope local solutions will be created by local people working with government. They expect governments to be more transparent by sharing information to empower citizens in their everyday lives.

Our communities expect all levels of governments to work better together for effective outcomes for the city. They also expect the City of Sydney finds solutions to city and community issues by collaborating with business, academia and community organisations.

A concept the Citizens Jury put forward in our 2050 consultations was a “new model of participatory governance, that genuinely engaged citizens in decision making on all levels, and [that] is responsive and adaptable”.

The jury also recommended our governance model include leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, saying “we want the Traditional Custodians of the land to help shape the city, through active participation in governance that is embedded [and], respectful”.

Through our regular engagement program, which includes consultation on more than 70 projects a year, people are clear about the importance of having a say on decisions that affect their lives. They value the opportunity to learn about the projects that are shaping their city, to hear from each other and to be able to engage both face-to-face and online.

They want engagement to be inclusive, representative and to build relationships. They continue to highlight the importance of being transparent about how community feedback has been considered in the decision-making process to help improve the level of trust in governments.

Why we need to act

The challenges that face cities like Sydney are complicated, perhaps more so now than at any other time. The impact of numerous crises in recent years has tested our capacity and resilience, including bushfires, floods and the pandemic.

We need to move faster to a zero-carbon future while adapting to the changing climate, water scarcity, increasing heat and more extreme weather events. These complex issues require integrated, collaborative and sophisticated governance solutions.

Challenges facing growing cities like ours – declining housing affordability, inadequate public transport, worsening traffic congestion and insufficient infrastructure and services – are often attributed to rapid population growth. That is part of the problem.

Governance of our metropolitan area is another contributing factor. When every level of government and government agencies plan in isolation from each other, it results in poorly coordinated infrastructure and services for the community.

Metropolitan Sydney needs new models of governance. Partnership, collaboration and cooperation are essential to achieve holistic outcomes for our communities. Alongside these new models of collaborative governance, we must use a place-based approach in all levels of government to sequence and provide infrastructure and services.

While trust in government and other institutions is diminishing, we must ensure our communities know that our decision making is people-centred, transparent and evidence-based. The City of Sydney will do its part to bring together governments, civil society, businesses and academia to achieve better outcomes with and for our communities.

To meet changing community expectations, our engagement approaches must be fit for purpose. We will continue to build deeper engagement using deliberative processes and new digital opportunities. We must also make it easy for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate. We need to do this while working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, children and young people as our future leaders, and through inclusive approaches that respect the diverse communities of Sydney.

We need to be clear about the role our communities play in shaping projects and always follow the principles and approaches outlined in our community engagement strategy.

Providing high-quality services, facilities and infrastructure for communities needs to be balanced with planning for long-term strategic projects, often between a consortium of partners.

Sustainable development must be underpinned by a commitment to achieving a sustainable financial position over the long term for government. This means bringing government and business together to cooperate on development priorities, as well as financing and investment models.

A critical challenge for governments across Australia is the misalignment between the growth in demand for services, facilities and infrastructure and available funding. We need to find new ways to meet the service demands of a growing population with proportionately less revenue.

Whether as leaders of business, of civil society or of government, we all have a role to play as stewards of the city.



First image: Children's Summit, one of the ways primary school students could have their say on the issues affecting the city and their future.

Second image: Youth Summit, one of the ways high school students could have their say on the issues affecting the city and their future during the development of Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision.

Photos: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

Our city's leaders continue to evolve to provide good governance and leadership for us.

1.1 The City of Sydney and other civic leaders provide effective governance and leadership	1.2 The City of Sydney has the capacity, capability, information, data and systems to serve the community into the future	1.3 The City of Sydney is financially sustainable over the long-term	1.4 The City of Sydney is an active contributor to the governance of metropolitan Sydney	1.5 The transformation of the city is enabled by successful partnerships and collaboration
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
Transparent, consistent and ethical decision making ensures the public has trust and confidence in our civic leaders, including the City of Sydney	The City of Sydney has played a role in Closing the Gap, is a culturally safe organisation and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including through the services we fund and accommodate in our properties Closing the Gap priority reform 3	The City of Sydney embodies best practice in its approach to corporate responsibility and financial sustainability	Collaborations with metropolitan councils and other partner organisations take advantage of opportunities and solve urban challenges, including Resilient Sydney	Progressive approaches to collaboration and partnerships across levels of government and with local, national, and global partners have transformed the city
Climate change considerations are embedded and integrated in all our decisions, anchored in science and incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems, intergenerational equity and social justice	The City of Sydney comprises people who are culturally competent and who reflect the diversity of the communities we serve	The City of Sydney's resources are managed to meet the needs of our communities and remain financially sustainable over the long term	The City of Sydney contributes to the reform of revenue and financing mechanisms for local government in NSW, ensuring sustainable levels of income are aligned with growth in infrastructure and service demand	Partnerships and collaborations with leading business, academic and community organisations achieve environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits for the city
Fit for purpose governance systems ensure all levels of government, including the City of Sydney can manage risk, monitor performance and pursue outcomes	The City of Sydney comprises empowered and capable employees who serve as champions for the community and the public good	Robust financial planning, effective asset, resource, procurement and contract management ensure the City of Sydney's sustainable financial position is maintained	Collaboration with other capital city councils and organisations achieve local and metropolitan-wide outcomes	Expertise from specialists, other city governments and those with an interest in the future of the city has contributed to the transformation of the city
Conscious and appropriate management of risk and opportunity is core to government, including the City of Sydney's decision making	The City of Sydney is the custodian of information and data on behalf of the community it serves, committed to ethical use, equitable access and proactive publication and sharing. This includes providing data to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to close the gap Closing the Gap priority reform 4	A diversified income base with innovative financing models ensures the City of Sydney can provide the infrastructure, assets, programs and services for our communities		Shared decision-making processes with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and practices
Policies and decisions for our civic leaders are evidence-based	Our systems, resources and capability are responsive to changing service needs	Exploration of different ownership and management models enable social and cultural programs, assets and services to be sustainably delivered into the future		
	The innovative use of data and technology informs, engages, educates and improves services to the community			

1.1 The City of Sydney and other civic leaders provide effective governance and leadership	1.2 The City of Sydney has the capacity, capability, information, data and systems to serve the community into the future	1.3 The City of Sydney is financially sustainable over the long-term	1.4 The City of Sydney is an active contributor to the governance of metropolitan Sydney	1.5 The transformation of the city is enabled by successful partnerships and collaboration
Monitoring progress Specialist advisory panels, committees and working groups established by the City of Sydney Council to assist in decision making	Monitoring progress Summary of City of Sydney participation in Reconciliation Australia's barometer survey Closing the Gap priority reform 3	Monitoring progress City of Sydney operating performance ratio. Benchmark >0%	Monitoring progress The City of Sydney's participation in formal and informal partnerships	Monitoring progress The City of Sydney's transformational projects and outcomes
	Proactive release of information and data, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by the City of Sydney Closing the Gap priority reform 4	City of Sydney own source revenue ratio. Benchmark >60%		
		City of Sydney building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio (alternate to industry standard). Benchmark >100%		

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Thought leader
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- 33 Greater Sydney councils
- Business community
- Community organisations
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Regulatory and standards organisations
- Resilient Sydney
- NSW Reconstruction Authority, formerly Resilience NSW
- Residents
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Council of Capital City Lord Mayors

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Resourcing strategy (annual)
 - Long-term financial plan (annual)
 - Community asset management plan (annual)
 - People strategy 2022–2026
 - Information & technology strategic plan 2022–2026
- Investment policy (annual)
- Investment strategy (annual)

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Direction 2: A leading environmental performer

Community priorities and aspirations

Overwhelmingly, people want the City of Sydney to respond to the climate emergency. It's an important issue for everyone, including residents, workers, visitors and business owners, across age groups and gender.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples identify understanding water as a way of healing Country and returning to values and connections that are synchronised with the environment.

People want a city with sustainable management of waste and use of resources, reduced emissions, fewer cars and less congestion, more electric vehicles and more public transport and active travel. They strongly endorse more recycling, reuse and waste reduction, especially plastic. Transitioning to a green, circular economy is seen as important.

People acknowledge the most vulnerable in our communities often bear an unequal share of the consequences of climate risks or the effects of our changing climate. There are calls to retrofit older buildings for energy efficiency and climate resilience.

People also see that a green city with plants and trees is an important response to addressing urban heat and climate change. A focus on species diversity will enhance resilience and provide habitat for wildlife.

Why we need to act

Environmental action has been a priority for our communities for more than a decade. It's imperative we continue working together, with greater urgency, to reduce our impact and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

Australia has the resources and capabilities to accelerate action and prosper from a cleaner economy, so we must make bold steps now to reduce emissions. The costs of inaction outweigh the costs of acting and there are economic benefits for those who take a leadership role.

The climate emergency is a major challenge facing cities. To avoid catastrophic environmental change, the world must limit global temperature increases. Yet global emissions continue to rise. The scale and urgency of the transformation required to turn this around is enormous.

The Paris Agreement aims to limit global heating to well below 2°C by the end of the century and it encourages efforts to keep warming below 1.5°C.

Globally, 1.5°C was exceeded for a full 12 months for the first time in February 2024, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service. This doesn't mean the world has failed to achieve the goal of the Paris Agreement – yet. But global heating above 1.5°C is fast becoming inevitable. Minimising its magnitude and duration is essential.

Around 70% of the city's emissions come from using electricity. We must make the transition from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible. Every tonne of emissions increases

the magnitude of climate change and future risks, such as more frequent and severe heatwaves, droughts and intense storms.

We need to make our buildings highly efficient and more resilient, which will reduce emissions, save money and put less strain on the grid. The most cost-effective way to achieve energy efficiency is in the building design and construction stages. But with many older buildings that will still be in use in 2050, it's essential we invest in retrofits.

While we create new solutions to meet our challenges, we need to do so in an inclusive way. People already marginalised in our city are likely to suffer greater impacts from climate change and urban hazards. We need to make sure people on low incomes, those living in apartments and renters don't miss out on the benefits of clean energy and upgrades. We also need to share responsibility for a just transformation for local and regional communities.

New infrastructure that keeps materials in the manufacturing system for as long as possible need to be developed. Reusing, repurposing and recycling materials instead of disposing of them as waste in landfill can significantly reduce emissions. It's part of the shift to a circular economy, which requires changes to product design, material use, producer responsibility, consumer behaviour and economic structures.

We also need to rebuild community confidence in waste and resource management. Inconsistency across the industry has led to some confusion among residents and businesses about what can be recycled. These challenges cannot be successfully addressed by individual councils acting alone. The NSW Government needs to demonstrate leadership in planning for adequate waste and resource treatment capacity and use its legislative power to facilitate circular economy outcomes across all sectors.

As our city gets hotter and our regions drier, we need to ensure an adequate water supply for drinking, greening our city and improving resilience to increased heat and drought. An increasingly variable climate means there is uncertainty over future rainfall to fill our dams and support our water supply system. Considering our increasing population, we clearly need to make use of recycled water sources.

Stormwater pollution is a major contributor to declining waterway health. We need to harvest stormwater by slowing it down and treating it to improve its quality for reuse or release into our waterways.

We want to create places that people naturally come to and gather, exercise, relax and celebrate by featuring water in our urban environment. We also need to rectify waterway damage caused by Sydney's industrial past. Highly polluted parts of our harbour need to be cleaned up so waterways can be used for recreation and improve biodiversity.

Intense storms and rainfall are predicted to increase in frequency and severity. This will increase the risk of flooding in some areas. In low-lying and coastal areas, this will also be exacerbated through sea level rise.

Water quality and greening are essential strategies to combat the growing problem of urban heat. By 2050 we could see the annual number of days above 35°C in our city double from a baseline of 5 days to 10 days. Rises in extreme heat put strain on infrastructure and increase community health problems such as heat stress, respiratory issues and insect-borne disease.

Planting more trees and plants will help cool the city and create more liveable places while supporting our wellbeing and urban biodiversity. The tree canopy cover in our streets and open spaces has increased over the past decade. But most land in the City of Sydney area is privately owned and there has been little increase in canopy on this land. We'll need improved mechanisms to green the city equitably.

Climate change poses significant risks to biodiversity, with plant and animal extinctions projected to increase. The impacts of climate change have significant impacts on nature. We need to be nature positive by protecting and maintaining the biodiversity that exists in our city, looking after areas of urban bushland and wildlife corridors.

The 2019/20 bushfires beyond our area had a devastating impact on local air quality. Bushfires indirectly impact the city's food supply and the availability of emergency response staff and resources.

One way to restore natural systems and reduce risk from future bushfires is for private landowners, governments and businesses to fund cool season cultural burning by Aboriginal practitioners around the country. We've been purchasing carbon credits from First Nations businesses that practice traditional burning which reduces emissions and improves nature.

Food production is highly sensitive to climate, with extremes like drought or flooding greatly affecting crop yields and livestock production. While modern farming technologies and techniques help reduce risk and boost production, the longer-term impact of droughts and widespread bushfires highlight a major potential vulnerability on agricultural production in the future.

We need to act swiftly on multiple fronts, and at all levels of government, to address these environmental challenges and create a sustainable and prosperous city. To do this our economy will need to realign with climate mitigation and adaptation needs, adopt new circular models, and grow a cleaner economy.



Sydney Park

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

2.1 The city reaches net zero emissions by 2035 with embodied carbon significantly reduced	2.2 Greening has increased to create a cool, calm and resilient city	2.3 Water is managed to support a resilient, sustainable and liveable city	2.4 A circular economy approach is embedded in products, services and systems	2.5 Our community has the capacity to understand risk, take action and collaborate for sustainable outcomes
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
The city is regenerative, contributing positively to the planet, society and to people's lives	Increased canopy cover and landscaping keep our streets and buildings cool and improve health and wellbeing	Water is celebrated and the harbour is a focal point for social connections and active lifestyles	Resources are retained for as long as possible within the product lifecycle and disposal is minimised	A shared responsibility for actions and environmental impact results in change
Actions are effective, reducing harm quickly and efficient, ensuring the greatest benefit for the least cost	Nature is integrated with the urban landscape, providing wildlife habitat and supporting healthy ecosystems	Potable water consumption is minimised through efficiency measures, water recycling and more effective use of rainwater and groundwater	Infrastructure and manufacturing processes are in place to capture and reuse all material streams to minimise reliance on new materials	Communities are supported to deal with the impacts of climate change and equity is improved
All activities and the built form of the city contribute to achieving net zero emissions by 2035 or sooner	Everyone has access to green spaces where trees, vegetation and water enhance our climate resilience	A range of strategies ensure water quality has improved	The full environmental impact, including embodied emissions, of all products is transparent	Climate risk is integrated into business and personal decision making
Economic growth remains uncoupled from carbon emissions to maintain our standard of living	Respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples supports their aspirations to connect with and care for Country	Investment in flood management and technological solutions keep people and infrastructure safe as the number of storm events increases		
Monitoring progress	Monitoring progress	Monitoring progress	Monitoring progress	Monitoring progress
City of Sydney local area greenhouse gas emissions. Target 70% reduction by 2030 from 2006 baseline of 5,815,521 tCO ₂ e.	Green cover across the City of Sydney local area. Target 40% by 2050	City of Sydney local area residential potable water use per person per day. Target 204 litres by 2030	City of Sydney local area residential waste collected. Target 10% reduction by 2030 and 15% reduction by 2035 from 2023 baseline of 300.44kg/capita	A summary of outcomes will be reported at the end of each 4-year period
Net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Sydney local area by 2035	Tree canopy cover across the City of Sydney local area. Target 27% by 2050	City of Sydney local area non-residential potable water use. Target 10% reduction by 2030 from 2018/19 baseline of 2.32 litres/sqm/day	City of Sydney local area residential waste diversion rate. Target 80% by 2030 and 90% by 2035	

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Thought leader
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Industry bodies
- Regulatory and standards organisations
- Resilient Sydney
- Residents
- Community organisations
- Not-for-profits and NGOs

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Environmental strategy (2025–2030)
- Leave nothing to waste – waste strategy and action plan (2017–2030)
- Adapting for climate change (2015)
- Greening Sydney strategy (2021)
- Urban forest strategy (2023)
- Street tree master plan (2023)
- Tree management and donation policy (2023)
- City plan 2036: local strategic planning statement (2020)

- Green environmental sustainability progress report (annual)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



City of Sydney's first electric truck
Photo: Jennifer Leahy / City of Sydney



Image: Paddington Reservoir Gardens
Photo: Josef Nalevansky / City of Sydney

Direction 3: Public places for all

Community priorities and aspirations

People want a city that is green with trees and plants and well-designed spaces that support social connection, with an emphasis on safety, amenities and accessibility. They want quality public space and places where they can be active and recharge their mental health. The Citizens Jury envisaged a city where every space is maximised for the greater community good.

People value the unique identity and architecture of their neighbourhoods and want to see that protected as the city grows. They see public spaces and village main streets as places for social interaction and building communities rather than just for retail activity. The quality of some of our streets is compromised by the volume of vehicle traffic, so people want to see changes to control speed, volume and noise.

Overwhelmingly, people want their neighbourhoods to be safe and welcoming places for people to come together and connect. Accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks, facilities and open spaces continues to remain a high priority, particularly for people living with disability and older people.

People want services and public facilities to be more available to support their lives in a 24-hour city. Community centres and libraries are important places for social interaction, particularly through affordable, accessible programs and events. They also provide safe, climate-resilient refuges during extreme weather, with air conditioning in libraries and community centres. People support increasing greenery and shaded areas in public spaces to make them more comfortable and accessible during heatwaves.

We continue to hear that the City of Sydney must maintain and enhance its respected role as a 'caretaker of place'. People consider this is critical to the city's economic performance.

Why we need to act

The best cities in the world are those with public places that encourage people to come together as part of their daily lives or to attend large events. Our city has great attributes to reinforce a unique sense of place and create a more liveable place that builds on our distinctive character and beautiful harbour landscapes.

A thriving, welcoming city provides places designed for everyone, including people from many cultural backgrounds, people on low incomes and people with disability. This enables the social life of the city to flourish and for everyone to participate equally.

Providing high-quality, inclusive and accessible public places for people is essential. Yet access to public places is increasingly contested, and in the decades to 2050 likely to be more so. Our population is likely to grow considerably by 2050, with as many as 2 million people in the city every day, up from about 1.3 million in 2019. We need to consider how more space can be found in the city.

In the city centre, the movement of people, goods and vehicles is important. But it's essential we make sure people feel safe, welcome and encouraged to stay. It's also important to provide people with reasons to visit, so the city is not just considered a place for work and business.

When we visit or stay longer, we also engage in the life of the city, including the businesses that operate in the city. The same is true for each of our main streets. This means creating more inviting, accessible places where people want to gather. Three city squares will be linked by the new pedestrian boulevard on George Street to provide more space for public life in the heart of our city. Public art has a role to play, as does enabling some spaces for performance and other creative uses.

Barriers in public places make it difficult for people with disability and others to participate and work in our communities. Our public areas need to be inclusive and accessible.

Not everyone is able to walk, ride bikes or use public transport. People with disability and people with chronic health conditions often rely on private transport and access to mobility parking, or places from where they can access key parts of the city, particularly in the city centre. So, it's important while reducing our overall reliance on cars in the city, we maintain priority access for people who need it.

Evidence shows that the quality of the place matters when decisions are made on investment and business location. High-quality urban environments, including public spaces are central to attracting and retaining talent in the city.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of public space as places for respite and recreation. As most city residents live in apartments, communal spaces on public and private land are people's backyards and are critical to support living in dense urban environments.

Large areas of open green space, where it's possible to be close to nature, are essential for our mental and physical wellbeing. Those same green spaces also reduce heat in our urban environment. But it will be challenging to create more of these spaces in an already established city. We need to find creative solutions to opening or sharing existing space and turning grey spaces into green spaces for wider community benefit.

We also need to find ways to manage the use of space to meet many needs while avoiding friction. Data about how, when and who accesses places will play an important role in achieving this.

Communal spaces help build community connections. They include parks, libraries and community facilities. We need to involve the private sector more in future to consider incorporating public and communal spaces in retail centres, school or university facilities and grounds, and apartment buildings.

We must consider the effects of a changing climate on streets and public places, building resilience to increasing heat and intensifying storms. We should use structures and trees to create more shaded, cool public places.

We must also consider the quality of the air we breathe. Air quality is impacted by bushfires outside the city, which will be exacerbated by climate change. Air quality is also impacted by traffic, so reducing vehicle movements and moving to zero emission vehicles and active transport is important.



First image: Dyuralya Square, Zetland
Second image: Crete Reserve, Rosebery
Photos: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

3.1 Aboriginal people's history and cultures, and truth-telling of this place, are evident in the public realm	3.2 Welcoming, inclusive and connected streets and public spaces are created, upgraded and maintained	3.3 Creativity and culture is embedded in the fabric of the city	3.4 Physical and visual connections to the harbour are strengthened	3.5 Equitable access to open green spaces, playgrounds, pools, recreational and sporting facilities supports social connection and wellbeing
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
Truth-telling, naming conventions, heritage design and management plans all recognise cultural practice and reinforce the history and connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have in this place	The city centre is inviting and lively, clean, accessible and safe, with a new Town Hall Square and upgraded civic squares and places where people want to spend time together during the day and evening	The city's streets and public spaces support large and small-scale civic and cultural activities	The harbour, unique to Sydney, has more visual and physical connections to the city	Healthy active lifestyles are encouraged, supporting mental and physical wellbeing of communities
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultural practice and expression continues as their right and responsibility in the public realm	Main streets are the social and economic hubs of their neighbourhoods, clean, safe accessible and inviting places for people to come together	Creativity and diversity of public art is evident across all neighbourhoods	There are more recreational opportunities in and around the harbour	Growing demand is supported by public space improvements, investment in new facilities as well as high standards of maintenance and servicing of existing facilities
Shared decision-making arrangements are in place regarding public land, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples benefit from continuous connections to Country Closing the Gap priority reform 1	Green and shaded avenues, public spaces and local streets are more comfortable and spacious places to walk, cycle, meet and socialise	Private spaces are transformed into shared spaces, hosting large and small-scale civic and cultural events		Innovative ways to unlock, activate and share spaces for wider inclusive community use are explored
	Local streets have fewer cars and more trees, making them safe for children to play and for all people to walk			
Monitoring progress A summary of outcomes will be reported at the end of each four-year period	Monitoring progress New public domain space in the City of Sydney local area from acquisition, dedications and road space conversions	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents satisfied with the range and quality of creative expression in the public domain such as art installations, murals, busking and street art in the local area	Monitoring progress A summary of outcomes will be reported at the end of each four-year period	Monitoring progress Green open space under the City of Sydney's care and control (excluding civic spaces)
				City of Sydney residents satisfied with access to parks and open space in the local area
				City of Sydney residents satisfied with access to public sports and recreational facilities such as pools and courts in the local area

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Development industry
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy (2024)
- Haymarket public domain plan (2024)
- City north public domain plan (2023)
- Public spaces public life study (2007, 2020)
- George Street 2020: a public domain activation strategy (2015)
- Greening Sydney strategy (2021)
- City art public art strategy (2011)
- Eora Journey: recognition in the public domain – public art plan (2011)
- Eora Journey harbour walk storytelling report (2019)
- City centre public art plan (2013)
- Green Square public art strategy (2013)

- Open space, sport and recreations needs study 2016
- City of Sydney public domain codes
- Sydney street codes (2021)
- Public domain manual (2021)
- Legible Sydney design manual (2019)
- Sydney streets technical specification (2019)
- Sydney lights: public domain design code (2015)
- Inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines (2019)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



Sydney Skate Park

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



Green Square Library and plaza
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Direction 4: Design excellence and sustainable development

Community priorities and aspirations

Our communities value protecting the characteristics that make the city unique. This includes making visible the presence and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We should also protect aspects of our heritage constructed after European settlement.

In planning the city, our communities want us to consider how we might encourage precincts to develop and foster creative and innovation economies.

Essential to supporting the growth of the city is addressing climate change and finding more sustainable ways of living. Our communities say it is important to create a greener, more liveable city. They want climate resilient buildings and infrastructure to cope with extreme weather.

They want efficient, well-serviced public transport and to walk and cycle shorter distances comfortably. These views support our transition to a city that is less reliant on cars and allows more space for people.

As the city grows, our communities challenge us to reconsider how space is used. How public and private spaces are inclusive and accessible, and used to their fullest extent.

Why we need to act

By 2050, two thirds of the world's population will live in cities. Sustainable development can only be achieved by transforming the way we create and manage our urban spaces. It requires us to plan and develop cities to meet today's needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

Cities globally occupy only 2% of the world's land mass, but they consume more than two thirds of the world's energy and account for more than 70% of global CO² emissions. But cities can become more efficient through good leadership and collaborative action by minimising the use of critical resources and energy and limiting the effects of global heating.

High-quality, well-designed housing and well-planned neighbourhoods with good access to infrastructure, jobs and services generally lead to good outcomes. When these standards are not available to everyone in the community, the outcomes are poor.

The City of Sydney area grew over the past decade, with 29,000 homes built, 35,000 more residents and 84,000 more jobs.

In the long term, we must continue to plan for increased capacity in the city. The City of Sydney's housing target to 2036 is for at least 156,000 private dwellings. From 2024, we need 32,000 new

homes to meet the 2036 target or around 2,300 homes a year. In 2024, the NSW Government imposed short term housing targets for councils to assist the state in meeting its share of the National Housing Accord. The target for the City of Sydney area is 18,900 private dwellings from 2024 to 2029. We will also plan for an extra 200,000 new jobs by 2036 (2017 baseline).

Our challenge is to make the best use of the space and land to include the range of jobs, businesses, homes and other activities needed to support the city's regional role as well as the daily lives of people in the city.

A further challenge is to support the people who live, work in and visit the city with adequate infrastructure, facilities and services at the right time and in the right places. This includes infrastructure for transit, health and education, essential utilities and affordable housing. It also includes the technological and digital infrastructure to support an innovation economy, local community facilities, a city that runs efficiently and is easy to get around.

How we provide and manage shared public spaces will become more important. It's essential to ensure everyone has equitable access to high-quality public spaces.

To maintain our competitiveness and attractiveness as a city, we must maintain high levels of amenity and protect the diversity and renowned character of our many unique precincts and neighbourhoods.

High-quality design is fundamental for private or public development and high-quality construction is critically important. We need to support the work of the building commissioner engaged by the NSW Government to improve construction quality and restore trust in the industry.

We need to design for health, wellbeing and safety. We need to make sure our buildings, public places and infrastructure provide flexible spaces that consider the needs of users today and in the future.

Our changing climate will create risks for wellbeing, environment, infrastructure and the economy. This requires us to adapt and become more resilient. We need to take action to reduce emissions, consume less water and reduce waste. With more frequent and severe heatwaves, flash flooding, droughts and storms forecast, it will be more difficult to manage the city's landscapes and ecosystems and the community's activities that depend on them.

We must change how we plan for and design the city, its buildings and public spaces, to respond to an already changed climate and emerging urban hazards, such as more noise and poor air quality.

With the pace of technological and environmental change, the buildings we design and build today must be flexible and adaptable to avoid becoming redundant before the end of their expected lives. We should find ways to efficiently retrofit existing buildings to cope with changing conditions.



One Central Park, Sydney
Photo: Getty Images

2050 outcomes

The city continues to grow sustainably and with good design. Communities are inclusive, socially connected, healthy and live in walkable well-serviced neighbourhoods supported by public transport. Places support economic activity and innovation. The impact of our changing climate is factored into the policies that influence development in the city.

4.1 The city's liveability is enhanced through well planned and designed development and public spaces	4.2 Productivity is supported by planning for jobs, innovation and enterprise activities	4.3 Communities are supported by the provision of infrastructure and assets that are aligned with growth	4.4 Good design leads to buildings that are high performing, well designed, inviting and inclusive	4.5 Well planned and designed development reduces environmental impacts and improves resilience, health and sustainability
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
The voices, rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respected in the implementation of Designing with Country and Connecting with Country knowledge and practices	The city is productive, fosters innovation and ensures economic opportunities for all	Collaborative approaches to infrastructure provision ensure transit, health, education, open space, water, energy, technology and other infrastructure are appropriately sequenced to support the city and its communities	Design excellence is integral to major development projects	Neighbourhoods, public places and buildings are planned, designed and built so the community is resilient to the impacts of climate change and other environmental hazards
Communities live in walkable well-serviced neighbourhoods supported by mass transit with access to jobs and recreation	The planning framework supports a stronger more competitive city centre	Technological infrastructure and the intelligent use of data, integrated with physical infrastructure and city systems, supports the growth of the city and communities	Collaborative approaches across governments at all levels ensure that standards are lifted and high quality, sustainable buildings are built to last	Development continues to reduce its impacts on the environment and the reduction
Well-designed neighbourhoods support inclusive, socially connected, and healthy communities	The capacity for innovative and high value economic clusters outside the city centre are supported	Infrastructure and assets are planned to withstand the impacts of a changing climate		Buildings and places are designed to reduce emissions and waste and use water efficiently
The character of distinctive neighbourhoods and heritage and iconic places valued by communities is respected and celebrated	Industry, urban services and business are supported to grow and evolve in the southern enterprise area and Green Square town centre			
Public and private spaces in the city are healthy, attractive, inclusive, safe, and inviting				
Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents living around a 10-minute walk (800m) to the following services: fresh food, childcare, health, leisure, social, learning, cultural and public open space	Monitoring progress Jobs in the City of Sydney local area. Target 700,000 by 2036	Monitoring progress Investment on acquiring, developing, and enhancing infrastructure and assets in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Architectural design excellence competitions completed for proposed development in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Outcomes are reported in Strategic Direction 2 in reduced emissions, reduced water, waste and energy consumption and increased greening
	Commercial floor space in the City of Sydney local area, including occupied and vacant business floor space			

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Advocate
- Networker
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Development industry
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Contributions plan
- City plan 2036: local strategic planning statement (2020)
- Central Sydney planning strategy (2016–2036)
- Sydney landscape code – Volume 1: Single dwellings (2016)
- Sydney landscape code – Volume 2: All development except for single dwellings (2016)
- Public spaces public life (2007, 2020)
- Planning for net zero energy buildings (2021)
- City of Sydney public domain codes:
 - Sydney street codes (2021)
 - Public domain manual (2021)
 - Legible Sydney design manual (2019)
 - Sydney streets technical specification (2019)
 - Sydney lights: public domain design code (2015)

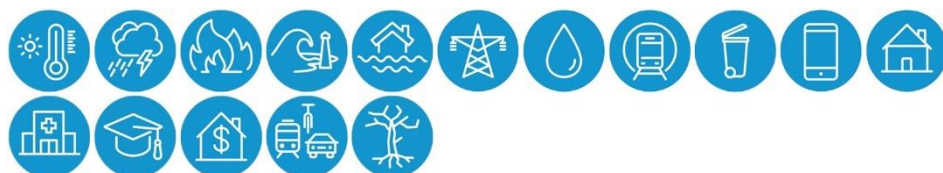
- Inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines (2019)
- Green Square town centre public domain strategy (2013)
- Green Square infrastructure strategy and plan (2015)
- City centre public domain plans
- Outdoor dining policy (2016)
- Smart city framework (2020)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



Harold Park

Photo: Adam Hollingworth @ Hired Gun



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

Community priorities and aspirations

Our communities want a more walkable city, with fewer or no cars in the city centre. They want a focus on making walking safer, more convenient and enjoyable.

Living in an area close to transport continues to be very important for people. They hope for a quality public transport network that prioritises space for people over cars and parking. This includes streets with more trees, gardens and plants, plus more space for walking, for children to play and for socialising.

They also want more accessibility for people with disability, including better infrastructure like ramps and wide footpaths, and more accessible public transport.

Our communities are concerned about the impact of increasing congestion. They want more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport and more walking and cycling networks.

They continue to support a more integrated, accessible and environmentally friendly transport system.

Why we need to act

Cities and transport continuously shape each other. A well-planned city balances movement and place. It uses technology to advance its transport systems, the economy and the health, wellbeing and social connections of its communities.

Our access strategy and action plan moves away from the idea that all movement and mobility is good and instead, focuses on providing good access. We're taking an integrated, multimodal approach to transport planning where we'll provide the right level of access for goods, services and daily needs with the minimum amount of mobility. This approach will elevate factors such as place, health, productivity and equity.

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

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

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

Our electrification of transport strategy and action plan documents that walking, cycling and public transport all produce lower emissions and use road space more efficiently than private vehicles.

Public transport supports Sydney's global competitiveness because it provides access for workers, businesses, students and visitors to come to the city or move around it. It is crucial to improving access to, from and within the growing city. The inner city needs continued investment in new metro and light rail lines and greater public transport capacity, especially for areas such as Green Square and Broadway/Parramatta Road.

The NSW Government's Metro City and Southwest opened in 2024, and Metro West will open in 2032. This investment can reduce the volume of buses and general vehicles, creating more space for people on major streets. We can make these spaces more attractive and greener.

Improving the quality and reach of public transport services will rely on high-quality transfers between services. Better cross-city connections with transfer hubs are a feature of most comparable cities. Inner Sydney could have fewer bus services running parallel to rail lines and create more bus services connecting across rail lines – with transfers made almost seamless.

Walking and riding bikes should be the first choice for short trips. Walking is sustainable, space efficient, low emission and low cost. It promotes community by enabling people to interact and spend time with each other in formal and informal ways. It's also a well-used form of recreation and brings mental and physical health benefits.

It's imperative we do all we can to make it attractive and comfortable for people to walk and ride around the city. But there are currently considerable delays to walkers at signals and footpaths are narrow and congested.

Wider footpaths will make walking easier and safer from a health perspective. Upgrading ramps, signs, lighting and the quality of the footpaths will make them more accessible and safer for everyone.

Cycling is also sustainable and space efficient. Creating a city for cycling brings many of the same benefits as improving walking conditions. Many people took up cycling for the first time during the pandemic, and we can build on this movement with safer, separated cycleways.

The number of bike trips continues to increase. Our cycleway counters on Bourke, Castlereagh, George (in Waterloo), Miller and Kent streets show a 16% increase in the February 2025 daily average compared with February 2024. There are currently 10,000 share bike trips in the local area each week. If the NSW Government legalises e-scooters and other e-mobility devices these will add more people to our cycleways, shared paths and road network, which will increase friction between people walking and riding.

We supplement these active and public transport options with support for car share that provides many households with an alternative to owning a car – they book a car share vehicle when they need one.

We need to accommodate an even greater focus on freight, servicing and deliveries in the coming decades. The pandemic accelerated online shopping by 5 to 6 times the level of growth in 2019, increasing pressure from deliveries in residential areas. This trend is likely to continue.



Walking to work, Union Square, Pyrmont
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Epsom Road Cycleway
Photo: Damian Shaw / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

5.1 Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting	5.2 Most people use the high-capacity, rapid and frequent public transport network that connects the city and the metropolitan area	5.3 More people walk more, as walking is the most attractive and convenient choice for short trips in the local area	5.4 More people ride more, as it's an attractive, convenient and safe option for everyday transport	5.5 Freight, servicing and kerbside space is managed to support the efficient functioning of the city while improving the amenity of city spaces
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
The city is shaded and cooler, quieter and calmer, with cleaner air and more space available for people to use the streets	An affordable, safe, and accessible network of public transport supports the 24-hour activities of the global city	People are prioritised by increasing the capacity, quality and amenity of our streets	A network of separated cycleways provides direct and safe access for people riding throughout the city	Access is maintained for freight, delivery and service vehicles as street space is reallocated
Vehicle speeds (max 30km/h in all areas of high pedestrian activity, max 40km/h elsewhere) and volumes are reduced, making the city centre and local neighbourhoods safer, healthier and quieter	Most activities in the city are within a 10-minute walk of a rapid, high frequency public transport service	The experience of people walking is enhanced for everyone with improved safety, quality, accessibility and comfort, including for children walking to school and within their neighbourhoods	The cycleway network is connected to desirable destinations and is shaded, legible and comfortable to use	Nearly all service and loading activity occurs off-street or off-peak. Space for traffic, parking and kerbside loading is prioritised for those who need it most
The existing motorway and distributor network are optimised to carry more through traffic, reducing driving on city streets	People transfer between public transport services in safe, accessible and high-quality interchanges	The city is easy to navigate, supported by a comprehensive wayfinding system.	Children can safely use the cycle network to get to school and other activities	Collaboration between businesses minimises the number of delivery, service and waste vehicles
All public transport, service and private vehicles are zero emissions		People are prioritised at key intersections, waiting no longer than 45 seconds, ideally no more than 30 seconds, so no more than 15% of a walking journey is spent at traffic signals	It is safer to ride on all roads where everyone who drives behaves safely and courteously	
Avenues that lead into Central Sydney are greener, with more space for walking and cycling				
Monitoring progress Separated cycleways in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Journey to work in the city centre using public transport	Monitoring progress Walking count in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Cycling counts in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Kerb space in city centre allocated to deliveries, servicing, and mobility parking A baseline was established in 2023 from which change will be measured
	Journey to work in City of Sydney locations other than the city centre, using public transport			

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- NSW Government
- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- A city for walking: strategy and action plan – continuing the vision (2024)
- Access strategy and action plan (2023)
- Cycling strategy and action plan 2018–2030 (2018)
- Liveable green network strategy and masterplan (2011)
- Electrification of transport strategy and action plan
- Legible Sydney wayfinding strategy (2012)
- Neighbourhood parking policy (2025)
- Car sharing policy (2025)
- Central Sydney on-street parking policy (2025)
- Public spaces public life study (2007, 2020)
- Net zero performance standards (2021)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



Light rail and transformation of George Street, Sydney

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Participants gather in Hyde Park before the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Direction 6:

An equitable and inclusive city

Community priorities and aspirations

Our communities want a safe and inclusive city, a place where differences are celebrated. Connected communities will also enhance resilience.

Results from our wellbeing survey show that fewer than half (45%) of respondents are satisfied with feeling part of their community and 45% say they experienced some form of discrimination in the past year.

People hope for a just and inclusive society. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this means the right to self-determination and implementing transformative justice models.

People living with disability want greater collaboration with advocacy groups to help challenge discrimination and negative attitudes towards disability that are still widely experienced.

People are deeply concerned about declining housing affordability and how this is undermining social diversity and forcing people to leave communities where they've always lived. This is particularly true for young people, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and vulnerable communities.

Communities identified education not only as a pathway to shared economic prosperity but also as a pathway to equal participation and influence in local decision-making.

They want the city's design, transport and services to include everyone by prioritising access for those most in need.

As people often experience multiple facets of disadvantage, they want a holistic response to issues involving all levels of government working together.

Why we need to act

We want our city to be a place where everyone is included and where people can flourish and fully participate in the social, cultural and economic life the city has to offer.

An equitable society is founded on the principle that all people, regardless of income or ability, should be able to afford the essentials of daily life. These include safe and affordable housing, fresh and healthy food, services such as health care and education, social supports, internet access, welcoming public spaces and the ability to participate in social and cultural activities and programs.

The broader effects of an unequal society are reflected in poor health and wellbeing, food and income insecurity, increased crime rates, reduced social cohesion and declining community resilience and connectedness.

Our community tends to be younger (median age 34), more than 50% were born overseas and 38% speak a language other than English at home. In housing, 65% rent, 41% live alone, 97% live in medium and high-density dwellings, and 7.3% of households are in social housing. More than 20,000 people are in low-income households with the largest age group 20 to 24 years.

More than half of residents counted at the last Census did not live in the area 5 years prior. This level of mobility is a consistent trend and can make forming social connections difficult for some.

Our community wellbeing indicators show inequalities for some groups in our local communities. These groups are impacted a lot more by the cost of living and the ability to access daily needs. These groups are a priority for us to support and create a more socially just city. They include people with disability, people of diverse sexualities and genders, people over 65 years, young people and people with English as a second language. We recognise the importance of intersectionality, where people identify as more than one of these priority communities. Our wellbeing indicators also shows people who may feel excluded are recent arrivals to the local area.

Since 2018 there have been significant stressors and shocks locally and globally, including the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic we supported our communities by establishing food relief grants. After the pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis and an extended period of high inflation has resulted in significant financial hardship for many residents and local businesses. The worsening housing affordability crisis has also placed significant strain on household budgets, outpacing wage growth for an extended period.

We know the effects of shocks and stressors can be passed on through generations. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience ongoing and devastating effects of government policy and practice. From colonisation in 1788 until at least the 1967 referendum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were discriminated against through being deliberately excluded from economic participation and denied access to education for decades.

This resulted in successive generations of Aboriginal people being unable to participate fully in the economy. These inequities caused intergenerational trauma and disadvantage in housing, education, health and opportunities.

But we can act now to redress this. This includes preventing further displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from this area due to unaffordable housing, the high cost of living and gentrification. We recognise the community's continuous connection to Country, their care and knowledge of Country and the significance of that connection. And we can create economic opportunities.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap reframes the way government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations work together to provide services to support communities and address inequality. We will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to achieve Closing the Gap outcomes in areas we can influence. In areas that fall outside our responsibility, we will listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and advocate in support of these issues.

We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to self-determination and recognise the need for their voices to be elevated and centred in government decision-making. On the national stage this would be through the respectful recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the constitution.

The rising cost of living, alongside the impacts of the pandemic, have drawn attention to existing inequalities in our communities. Some people are excluded from opportunities for essentials such as secure work and affordable housing, and adequate nutritious food becoming increasingly out of reach. This is particularly impacting people on low incomes and income support payments. Lower educational or workforce participation rates mean our economy cannot grow to its full potential.

Nationally we're seeing an increase in loneliness and social isolation. We know that people with a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood and social connection are less likely to feel isolated and more likely to be happy and trust other people. The ability to connect is supported through a

network of walkable streets and public open spaces, as well as our libraries and community centres that provide direct and indirect wellbeing benefits free of charge or at low cost.

In our communities, people on a low income, people with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience clear inequalities in distribution of income, employment rates, education and occupational skill levels, housing status and costs. The inequalities extend to areas such as health, involvement in public life, and access to and costs around transport.

Feeling safe, included and welcome also impacts how and where we can move around the city. People with disability still face significant barriers in getting around. This can hamper their independent access to employment, medical and government services, recreation and social and cultural activities. Women and girls and people of diverse sexualities and genders also don't feel as safe as the general community, particularly at night.

An important aspect of feeling safe is for people to feel welcome and respected for who they are. Creating culturally safe and welcoming spaces for everyone is important, particularly for our priority communities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people of diverse sexualities and genders, people from multicultural communities and people with disability.

Access to technology is vital for inclusion. While technology is a great enabler of people, rapid advances in technology risk worsening the 'digital divide' in our communities between people who have access and see the benefit of digital engagement, and those who don't have access or opportunity.

We cannot achieve the vision for a socially just and resilient Sydney alone. It requires all levels of government, business, service providers and communities working together.

Addressing inequality and inclusion is complex and requires collaboration and responses from all levels of government. Local government can lead the way, as well as add our voice to broader issues, advocating for change on behalf of the communities we serve.



Catherine Smith visiting Customs House Library

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

6.1 Strengthen partnerships and relationships that enable shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and prioritise their cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic aspirations	6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city	6.3 Everyone has equitable access to participate in our economic growth and share in our prosperity	6.4 Everyone is engaged and actively participates in the governance of their city	6.5 Everyone has the skills, tools and access to technology to engage and participate in a digital life	6.6 There is equitable access to education and learning opportunities, everyone can participate in a creative practice	6.7 A sustainable food system that provides access to safe and nutritious food
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
Respect is the basis when partnerships are formed, leading to positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Everyone can participate and become involved in the city, particularly children and young people	Sydney is a city that is fair and socially just	Everyone actively participates in governance and decision-making processes	The 'digital divide' is addressed with everyone having access to the digital assets, tools and services to participate in economic and civic life	Everyone has equitable access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education and care	Everyone has access to fresh, nutritious and healthy food
Partnerships and arrangements are in place with the City of Sydney and other levels of government to accelerate policy and local progress on Closing the Gap targets Closing the Gap priority reform 1	Community volunteers are supported and celebrated	Everyone can prosper with opportunities for equitable economic participation	Everyone is appropriately represented in decision-making by institutions and organisations	Everyone has the skills to protect and control their privacy and personal information ensuring data security and confidentiality	Public education facilities meet the needs of our growing and diverse communities	Everyone is supported to live healthy, sustainable, and active lives
Barriers to economic, social and cultural participation and inclusion are identified and removed	Communication is inclusive and accessible to reach diverse communities	Affordability and other barriers to participation in the economic, cultural, and social life of the city are identified and addressed	Everyone has equitable access to information and data to help them make informed decisions	Digital innovation empowers everyone to share knowledge, skills and experiences, fostering an environment where we can experiment, collaborate and create solutions that benefit everyone	Everyone can participate in and has access to learning opportunities throughout all stages of life	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are supported in their right to self-determination	Barriers to advance the inclusion of people, including children and young people, and people with disability in our communities are identified and addressed	Everyone can afford the essentials of daily life: safe and secure housing, healthy food, health care and education, and heating in winter	Young people are supported to become future civic leaders	Everyone can access open data, tools and space with ethical digital protections for privacy	Everyone has access to spaces and equipment for creativity and opportunities to develop digital skills and overcome the digital divide	

6.1 Strengthen partnerships and relationships that enable shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and prioritise their cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic aspirations	6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city	6.3 Everyone has equitable access to participate in our economic growth and share in our prosperity	6.4 Everyone is engaged and actively participates in the governance of their city	6.5 Everyone has the skills, tools and access to technology to engage and participate in a digital life	6.6 There is equitable access to education and learning opportunities, everyone can participate in a creative practice	6.7 A sustainable food system that provides access to safe and nutritious food
Monitoring progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that the City of Sydney has formed or maintained a formal partnership Closing the Gap priority reform 1	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who are satisfied with feeling a part of the community	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who say they are financially insecure	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who agree there is enough opportunity for them to have a say on issues important to them	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents with internet access at home	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents satisfied with access to learning and education opportunities in the local area	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who ran out of food at any point in the past year and could not afford to buy more
	City of Sydney residents who agree it a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) – measure of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage	City of Sydney residents who participated in decision-making activities (defined as attending body-corporate meeting and/or sitting on a decision-making board or committee, such as a corporate board, school council, sports club committee or church committee) in last 12 months			

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents
- Not-for-profits and NGOs

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Community engagement strategy and community participation plan (annual)
- A city for all: social sustainability policy and action plan 2018–2028 (2018)
- A city for all: inclusion (disability) action plan 2021–2025 (2021)
- Stretch reconciliation action plan (2020)
- Eora Journey economic development plan (2016)
- Inclusive and accessible public domain, policy and guidelines (2019)
- Resilient Sydney strategy (2018)
- Smart city strategic framework (2020)
- Long-term financial plan (annual)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



OzHarvest supermarket in Waterloo

Photo: Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney



Celebrating the opening of Darling Square Library

Photo: Adam Hollingworth / City of Sydney

Direction 7: Resilient and diverse communities

Community priorities and aspirations

We continue to hear the importance of being truthful about our past and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Resilient Sydney research highlights that the European invasion was a 'sudden shock' and colonialism a 'chronic stress'. This reinforces the importance of making Sydney safer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

People agree there needs to be a stronger focus on building social connections to improve resilience, and there are concerns about the impact of racism and discrimination in undermining social connectedness.

Cost of living pressures, including a lack of affordable and quality housing are seen to be undermining people's resilience, particularly impacting young people and priority communities. Helping all groups have their voices heard, including priority communities would reduce vulnerability and increase social cohesion and inclusion.

There is a strong call for climate adaptation measures, such as improving building designs and access to affordable housing that's resilient to climate change.

People also acknowledge the role of community collaboration and the importance of local initiatives like food security programs, public green spaces, and emergency preparedness education to foster community resilience. People stressed the importance of recognising and drawing experience from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's wisdom to support us to become more resilient and learn from thousands of years of lived experience and best practice.

People hope to see the city of the future as culturally diverse, with differences embraced. They want communities to be connected, generous and welcoming.

They see a city where people trust and help each other and where people who need more assistance are supported and included. They also want a city where communities, businesses and government work together in new and improved ways for the benefit of everyone.

People hope for a future community that embraces sharing of spaces, resources and knowledge. They understand that improving wellbeing is the basis for better mental and physical health outcomes. Young people express a desire for a supportive and collaborative city.

Our data shows people strongly endorse a safe city. This goes beyond addressing specific physical safety concerns. People see safety manifested in more active and better designed public spaces, with more people walking and riding bikes, or just living in and enjoying the city. They said feeling safe includes being free from discrimination based on gender or race and providing a more inclusive society.

Why we need to act

A resilient city is prepared, connected and informed. It has networks of individuals, local neighbourhoods, businesses and communities ready to act together in response to an emergency or chronic issue.

The city and its populations, particularly people on low incomes and/or living in poor quality housing and those experiencing homelessness, are vulnerable to extreme weather events and will be more so in future, such as heatwaves and storms. We're also not immune from the consequences of major droughts, bushfires or floods surrounding the city or in regional areas.

The complexity and interdependence of its systems makes the city vulnerable to acute shocks and exacerbates ongoing stresses in emergency situations. Extreme events can affect communications, transport, infrastructure and services in the city. Being prepared will help us respond to and recover better from these situations.

But it's not just these extreme situations that we need to plan for. It's also important to manage ongoing issues that can increase community stress, such as population growth, increasing cost of living, high rates of personal and household debt and chronic illness. We need to plan for health impacts associated with climate change, particularly related to increasing heat.

Evidence shows that communities with strong social bonds tend to be more resilient. Building social cohesion takes time and it's crucial to invest in reinforcing these connections during more stable periods to ensure people can collaborate effectively when disaster occurs. Just as importantly, strong social cohesion and connection is critical during times of stress and loss within local communities ensuring people come together to support each other, particularly in priority communities.

Incidents of anti-social behaviour, family and domestic violence and deaths in the community all impact on people's mental and emotional wellbeing. It's important at these times people feel supported and have access to the services and programs they need.

Being connected to the community where you live is essential for wellbeing and is the cornerstone of a socially sustainable and resilient city. The better we connect with people daily, the more protected we are from loneliness and its impacts on wellbeing, and the easier it will be to cope when community members need to rally and look after each other. We especially need to care for more vulnerable community members.

Recent data from the City of Sydney's community wellbeing indicators shows that 53% of our community members are confident they could get help from their neighbours, but almost all would help their neighbours. This suggests a lot of goodwill but lack of connection.

Urban loneliness and social isolation have emerged as significant global issues that can impact on wellbeing and physical and mental health. They can also impact on the ability of communities to come together in times of need.

We've noted a decline in social cohesion across metropolitan Sydney. There are multiple risk factors for loneliness and social isolation in our area. People move houses regularly and many live here only briefly. In many households, residents speak a language other than English. A high proportion of people live alone. Students and younger people are particularly at risk of social isolation.

Some groups have little or no face-to-face contact with others in their local area. We need to promote opportunities for people to connect and reduce social isolation.

In the city, we have people of diverse languages, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and gender. These diversities and the intersections between, can be a catalyst, but also a challenge to forming strong bonds between people. The City of Sydney is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse areas in NSW and Australia. Almost 50% of our residents were born overseas, and 34.8% of people speak a language other than English at home. Most spoken languages include Mandarin,

Cantonese, Thai, Spanish and Indonesian. Furthermore, a significant number of international students study and work in the City of Sydney area.

We are committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of diverse multicultural communities across the city and facilitating partnerships that nurture cultural diversity, increased community connections and a sense of welcome and belonging for all.

Our communication and engagement with multicultural communities is inclusive. We consult with and co-design our programs and activities with local multicultural communities to promote capacity building, inclusion and combat racism and discrimination.

In the decades to 2050, there will be limitless possibilities for connecting online. A digital city will provide alternative ways for people to connect, share and learn from each other. Digital literacy skills and access to devices for all will be critical.

Meeting in person will remain vital. With more shared spaces, fewer or smaller private spaces and more activity in public places, we need to live more harmoniously and make the city work for all of us. This includes providing community spaces in high-density living environments.

Our data shows that our community's perception of safety is high and has either been stable or increasing over time. Property crime has decreased. But we need to reduce domestic and family violence in our area and make sure children are safe and free from harm.

Our mobility and freedom to move around the city is impacted by our perception of safety and this differs across genders. Sydney is regularly ranked one of the safest cities, and our 2023 wellbeing survey found people feeling safe while walking alone after dark, increased from 50% in 2011 to 63% in 2023. But the 2023 survey results show that 27% of women say they feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' walking alone near home after dark, compared to 10% of men.

An important aspect of feeling safe is for people to feel welcome and respected for who they are. Creating culturally safe and welcoming spaces, and importantly providing a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continues to be a focus.

We're committed to embedding the NSW child safe standards into our organisational leadership, governance and culture. We'll adopt strategies and act to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.

We know from the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that abuse that occurs within organisations is not just a past problem, it continues today.

The City of Sydney recognises the significant lifelong impact abuse can have on children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse in our organisation. We recognise our moral and legal obligations to prevent child abuse.



Community sewing bee at the Juanita Nielsen Community Centre in Woolloomooloo to make animal rescue pouches

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

The city and its public places and infrastructure can withstand impacts from a changing climate and emergency situations and support long term health and wellbeing. We work with communities, businesses, and other organisations to strengthen connections and networks, and the city is prepared and able to recover from most situations.

7.1 Communities are connected and socially cohesive	7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing	7.3 Infrastructure, services and communities are prepared for and can withstand the impacts of acute shocks and chronic stresses	7.4 The city economy is diversified to strengthen its resilience	7.5 People feel safe in the city	7.6 Communities are empowered to lead the change they want to see in the city
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
We move forward together through truth-telling and by acknowledging and addressing the history of our local area, including the impact of colonisation and subsequent policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Community and cultural facilities offer welcoming and inclusive experiences that support wellbeing and quality of life for everyone	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge and experiences contribute to the city's resilience and adaptation	The city economy is thriving, and growth is sustained from a diverse economic base	The city is seen as a safe and secure place where everyone lives, works, visits and does business, free from discrimination	A strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector provides high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the local area Closing the Gap priority reform 2
Diversity continues to be valued and is a strength of communities	Community and cultural facilities are inclusive, affordable, and accessible to everyone	The city, its public places, services and infrastructure are ready to withstand natural hazards, critical infrastructure failure and international crisis	The city economy comprises a range of business sizes from major corporations and small to medium enterprises, to startups, scaleups for-purpose and social enterprises	Children get the best start in life and grow up free from harm	A strong culture of community led solutions and willingness to help each other prevails in the city
Organisations and institutions promote respect, connect communities and create a sense of belonging	Community and cultural spaces are designed with the community and managed to support social connection and wellbeing	Business, government, and communities collaborate to ensure the city is prepared for, can respond to, and recover from acute shocks and chronic stresses	Job opportunities have been expanded and strengthened by reinforcing Sydney's competitive advantages and addressing underlying economic vulnerabilities	Domestic and family violence and sexual assault has been reduced	Communities are empowered to engage and participate in the design and success of projects and initiatives that impact them
Community initiatives strengthen social inclusion, enable connectedness and reduce social isolation within and across communities	Improved social connections and wellbeing contributes to everyone's mental and physical health outcomes	Communities and community organisations have developed their capacity and capability for resilience	The city economy includes a higher proportion of secure jobs	Design of streets and other public spaces, technology and other preventive strategies have made the city safer	
		Our efforts to build resilience and capacity extends to communities beyond our local area, including aiding national and international communities to survive emergency situations			

7.1 Communities are connected and socially cohesive	7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing	7.3 Infrastructure, services and communities are prepared for and can withstand the impacts of acute shocks and chronic stresses	7.4 The city economy is diversified to strengthen its resilience	7.5 People feel safe in the city	7.6 Communities are empowered to lead the change they want to see in the city
Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who are satisfied with feeling a part of the community	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents satisfied with opportunities for sporting or recreational activities in the local area	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who agree they are prepared for a major emergency	Monitoring progress Top 6 industry sectors in the City of Sydney local area ranked by proportion of jobs in each. Aim is for no one sector to dominate	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who feel safe walking alone near home after dark	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who participated in at least one community engagement activity (defined as attendance at a community meeting, public hearing or discussion; meeting with, phoned, or written to any local politician; joined a protest or demonstration and /or participated in an online discussion about political or local community issues) in the past 12 months
City of Sydney residents who agree it a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities	City of Sydney residents satisfied with library access in the local area	City of Sydney residents who agree they have a bag of essential items prepared in case of an emergency		City of Sydney residents who feel safe walking alone near home in daylight	Suppliers engaged by the City of Sydney who identify themselves as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Closing the Gap priority reform 2
					City of Sydney spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Target \$2m annually Closing the Gap priority reform 2
					Grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations Closing the Gap priority reform 2

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Metropolitan Sydney councils
- Emergency services organisations
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents
- Resilient Sydney
- NSW Reconstruction Authority, formerly Resilience NSW
- Not-for-profits and NGOs

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- City of Sydney resilience strategy 2023–2028 (2023)
- A city for all: social sustainability policy and action plan 2018–2028 (2018)
- A city for all: inclusion (disability) action plan 2021–2025 (2021)
- A city for all: community safety action plan 2019–2023 (2019)
- Child safety strategy (in development)
- Resilient Sydney strategy (2018)
- Smart city strategic framework (2020)
- Humanitarian crisis response guidelines (2010)

- Support for charities guidelines (2018)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



'Community's Got Talent' showcasing performances from local community members
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



***In Between Two Worlds* by artist Jason Wing, Kimber Lane, Haymarket**
Photo: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney

Direction 8: A thriving cultural life

Community priorities and aspirations

People told us they want a lively city, one that weaves its culture, heritage, public art, events and bold ideas through the very fabric of the urban environment and daily experience. Participating in arts and culture is seen as central to our way of life, it helps build social connections, reduces isolation and improves mental health. It also plays a role in our identity, both individually and as a community.

The constant theme is that we must celebrate our city's unique character and heritage. That begins with feeling pride in our connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history as well as the diverse communities that make Sydney their home.

People acknowledge that the richness of culture we experience can be fragile. They want to see it prioritised and protected.

Young people feel Sydney lacks affordable cultural and recreation options for them. Many people are concerned that our city risks losing its own culture and identity. It could become a place lacking diversity in the creative professions with an over-reliance on the importation of culture produced elsewhere. If this continues, we will lose the spaces, talented people and local resources to tell our own stories.

People see the need for more affordable creative spaces and long-term support for cultural infrastructure.

People said more could be done to create an inclusive cultural life, where people feel there are enough responsive, relevant opportunities for them. We need to address these issues of representation, inclusion and accessibility. As mid-to-high density housing becomes the norm, we need to ensure there are spaces and programs available where everyone can participate in a creative practice.

The creative and cultural sector feels it is important to diversify the city's cultural offerings, providing opportunities at every stage of creative development and career progression including platforms for emerging talent, through to mid-sized spaces and mid-career opportunities that showcase a variety of voices from our local communities.

People believe artists are an important part of our community and should be involved in everyday decision-making. We should better harness the full potential of our creative practitioners and apply their thinking citywide, integrating it into every aspect of city life and a bold, innovative, meaningful, culturally inclusive long-term vision for our future.

Why we need to act

Greater Sydney is home to almost a third of the nation's cultural workforce, the largest concentration in the country. These creative workers and professionals drive innovation, adaptation and experimentation, and are a major part of our ongoing economic strength. The cultural sector provides significant benefits to other sectors and industries including tourism, education, construction, hospitality and recreation.

Culture is an essential component of all aspects of life. It gives our city its character and creates a shared identity for our diverse and growing population. It is fundamental to an inclusive society, that helps our communities remain connected in times of change.

The greatest global cities thrive with a multitude of cultural offerings and creative industries. Sydney's culture is as much about connecting with the world through spectacular harbourside events and institutions as it is about connecting with your neighbours at a local gallery or listening to music in a pub.

For our city to succeed, we must value our unique, eclectic and diverse people by welcoming new ideas and forms of expression.

This begins by understanding the truth of our shared past, laying the groundwork for a future which embraces all Australians. The city's ongoing custodianship by the Gadigal of the Eora Nation is an essential part of this future, as is Sydney's continuing place as central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities. We're all enriched by the stories of our city, and understanding our history helps bind and guide us towards a shared future.

The growth of the City of Sydney area and rising property prices have had unintended consequences for our cultural life, impacting the viability of venues for live music, small theatres, galleries, artist studios and rehearsal spaces. In the decade up to 2022, we lost more than 170,000m² of creative space in our local area.

There are significantly fewer spaces available where creative professionals can work. As former industrial areas have undergone residential development, we've lost workspaces for industries such as fashion, craft, media and design.

In recent years an even more urgent existential threat has emerged – the cost of housing is pricing artists out of our local area. The average cost of a one-bedroom rental in Sydney is now the equivalent of 62% of the average artist income.

Our creative industries have entered a period of extreme housing stress. These rising housing costs are dividing the creative workforce along socioeconomic lines, favouring those who can afford to live here leading to a loss of skill and diversity. This is troubling, as there is a strong correlation between cultural participation and wellbeing. While the city's population has diversified, our cultural offerings are not keeping pace with that change and our cultural workforce is becoming smaller and more uniformly 'Anglo-Australian'.

Cultural and creative occupations make up 15% of the total workforce in the City of Sydney area. These industries continue to be vital to our local economy, but they're retracting. The loss of creative workers is most apparent in the core cultural professions (artists, writers, musicians and performers) which have declined by more than 11% in the past decade. Sydney is the only capital city in Australia experiencing a reduction in artist population.

The gig-based employment of many workers in the creative sector makes them particularly vulnerable to shocks and sudden change, which was seen during the pandemic. This is particularly true for artists from emerging and diverse backgrounds and early to mid-career sole traders who juggle multiple short-term contracts and create their own work.

Legislative interventions like the lock out laws, liquor licensing schemes, user-pays policing, land use planning and building regulations all can impact the viability of creative professions. Likewise, the rise of streaming services, generative technology, and changes to local content quotas will have further consequences for artists, writers, directors and musicians.

A city that aspires to a strong cultural life needs to value its artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers, designers and other creative practitioners. This begins by acknowledging the complexity and precarity of these industries. We need to understand that the creative sector includes broad, interdependent supply chains, so changes impacting one part have a ripple effect on others.



Image: East Sydney Community and Arts Centre
Photo: Jessica Lindsay / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

8.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultural practices are valued and supported	8.2 We value our cultural life and champion our creative industries	8.3 An increasing number of creative workers live or work in the city	8.4 Sydney's cultural life reflects the diversity of our communities	8.5 There is an increased supply of accessible creative space
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
Cultural practice and rights is defined and determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Sydney is renowned for its world-class cultural offerings and investment in bold ideas and new talent	Diverse creative communities call the city home	Diverse voices are enabled and empowered to share their stories, strengthening identity and creating connections	All neighbourhoods have affordable and accessible cultural spaces and activity, supported by public transport
The cultural life of the city has strong connections to the history of this place and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	By championing local cultural production, our stories, history, and local creative achievements are recorded and shared	Reform of the sector enables creative practitioners to earn a sustainable income from their work	Culture is essential to all aspects of city life – creating meaning, identity and purpose and fostering an inclusive society	A stable and increasing supply of affordable space enables creative practitioners to live and work in the city
Gadigal culture is acknowledged and respected	Creativity is core to urban policies, ensuring the city is open, accessible and renowned for quality creative experiences	Defined creative precincts are the focal point for growing creative living, working and production	Leadership of the creative sector represents the diversity of our communities	At-risk venues, infrastructure and cultural assets are protected
	We celebrate the many cultures of our diverse, multicultural and inclusive city			Innovative partnerships, financing models and revenue streams enable new cultural infrastructure at scale
Monitoring progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' satisfaction with the range and quality of creative expression in the public domain	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents who are satisfied with feeling a part of the community	Monitoring progress Creative industries workforce in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress City of Sydney residents satisfied with opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities in the local area	Monitoring progress Creative industries enterprise space in the City of Sydney local area
	City of Sydney residents satisfied with number and quality of arts and cultural events such as festivals, performances and exhibitions in local area			

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Thought leader
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Cultural and creative sector
- Community organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Cultural strategy 2025–2035
- Live music and performance action plan (2014)
- Busking and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practice policy (2019)
- Making space for culture in Sydney – cultural infrastructure study (2020)
- OPEN Sydney strategy and action plan (2013)
- City art public art strategy (2011)
- Eora Journey: recognition in the public domain – public art plan (2011)
- City centre public art plan (2013)
- Green Square public art strategy (2013)
- Chinatown public art plan (2015)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



Artists Camila De Gregorio and Christopher Macaluso from Egpicnic with their work, *The Birds*, one of many designs selected for the creative hoardings program

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Researcher at work in the Clean Room of the University of Sydney's Nanoscience Hub. The Sydney Nano is unique in Australia and one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in the world. The university is aiming to discover groundbreaking solutions to challenges such as water security, greenhouse gas emissions, toxicity of nanomaterials, inoperable conditions, hurdles in quantum technology development and untreatable neural diseases.

Photo: Louise Cooper / University of Sydney

Direction 9:

A transformed and innovative economy

Community priorities and aspirations

Communities and businesses alike believe the city's ongoing economic success relies on building environmental resilience into decision-making. Climate change will shape business risks and changing patterns of consumption. There is an ongoing desire for Sydney to position itself as a global leader in innovation, with strong support for attracting investment in technology and green industries.

Businesses are clear that stewardship of place is important. For innovation to flourish in the city, we need to create distinctive precincts with high-quality amenities, where residents and workers can live, work and visit. These precincts need appropriate infrastructure and capacity for innovative businesses to cluster and grow.

There is a high level of support for making the city more liveable, greener and more walkable. A walkable neighbourhood is one where people can comfortably walk from their home to a main street, to parks, playgrounds or other facilities in around 10 minutes. They also want good public transport.

People feel the city centre and main streets must be lively, welcoming and inclusive places day and night. A liveable city attracts talent, workers, visitors and residents.

As metropolitan Sydney develops in the coming decades, coordination and collaboration between the key economic centres must evolve. This includes developing new economic sectors and stimulating growth. There must be access to affordable housing and commercial space, a focus on education, skills and workforce development and clear global commercial pathways. There should be grants, incentives and other support mechanisms for startups.

We must also address community concerns that not everyone has benefited from recent economic growth. Efforts to widen participation and reduce disadvantage must be a priority.

People feel it is important that economic growth benefits all sectors of society, particularly through the development of affordable housing for key workers and creatives. Targeted investment and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs was also raised, acknowledging the value of First Nations culture as an asset that contributes to Australia's identity and economy.

Why we need to act

Work by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development suggests that widening income inequality affects us all. The consequence of declining incomes for the lowest earners and low-income households also creates social impacts that lead to lower overall growth in gross domestic product.

Addressing these issues requires collaborative action and new perspectives on economic models. Demand is likely to rise for occupations that aren't easily automated or skills resistant to mechanisation. These areas require creativity, original thought and innovation. We need to ensure this is addressed by our education system and lifelong learning.

While Sydney ranks among the highest performing urban economies in the world, we must act to sustain and enhance this position. We must embrace the changes brought about by the pandemic and economic downturn to emerge confident that the city's economy can transform, innovate, diversify and be sustainable in the long term.

Despite the pandemic, our floorspace and employment survey in 2022 shows that jobs in the City of Sydney area grew to 520,000 from 500,000 in 2017. There's also anywhere between 50,000 to 100,000 transient, construction and home-based business jobs in the city each year.

In 2016 it was estimated up to 40% of the Australian workforce had 'non-standard' jobs with no employment security. More than 4 million people were engaged as casuals, on short-term or part-time contracts, employed through labour hire companies or as 'independent' contractors. In our local area, the number and proportion of insecure jobs increased between 2017 and 2022 from 27,000 (5.4%) to 34,000 (6.5%), largely due to the impacts of Covid on smaller businesses.

The widespread adoption of working from home practices has impacted how often workers commute across the week, with Central Sydney office occupancy rates lower than before the pandemic. This presents challenges and opportunities as use patterns in the city shift and continue to shift in the future. Maintaining a vibrant and active city centre will be critical to the health of the Greater Sydney economy.

While the pandemic closed borders and saw visitor numbers plummet, year on year the industry has recovered with international visitor numbers nearing pre-pandemic levels. The quality of the international, domestic or local visitor experience is a major driver of future economic growth.

To support a vibrant city economy with more visitors, we need strategies to generate more activities and reasons for people to visit the city and return more frequently. This should include a stronger role for culture and creativity in the city, including events and activations.

A vibrant and safe night-time culture is also vital to our city's future. Our reputation as a city for fun and sophisticated socialising and our ability to attract young people is in decline. Given Sydney's cost of living and housing affordability pressures we need to respond with higher levels of amenity and cultural experience.

We can become leaders in the transition to a green economy. Scientific evidence indicates the next decade is crucial for action and investment and the economic opportunity is significant. It's projected Australia will see \$4 trillion in green investment by 2030, resulting in a net increase of 11,000 jobs in NSW. New businesses and business models will emerge in the transition to a circular economy which will reduce waste and may also find innovative solutions to other environmental problems.

By acknowledging the possible consequences of large-scale change, such as moving to a net zero economy, we need to carefully plan the transition for workers in those sectors where negative impacts occur. It's important that industries and jobs are replaced so no one is left behind.

Metropolitan Sydney's economic structure will significantly change in the decades leading to 2050. For Sydney to be successful, there must be significant jobs growth in major centres such as Parramatta and the Western Sydney International Airport region. These major economic centres need to be connected, work together, specialise and complement each other.

To drive an innovation-led transformation across our economy, we're targeting 70% of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries – finance and financial services, professional and business services, higher education and research, ICT, and creative industries.

These high-value jobs will be clustered in defined precincts across our city, with clustering supporting specialisation, innovation and productivity. The success of these precincts will be critical to growing our economy, improving equitable access to employment opportunities and spurring the

innovation that will help solve some of the biggest challenges our communities face, including climate change. Tech Central is Australia's largest innovation precinct in Camperdown, Haymarket and Eveleigh, all within the City of Sydney area.

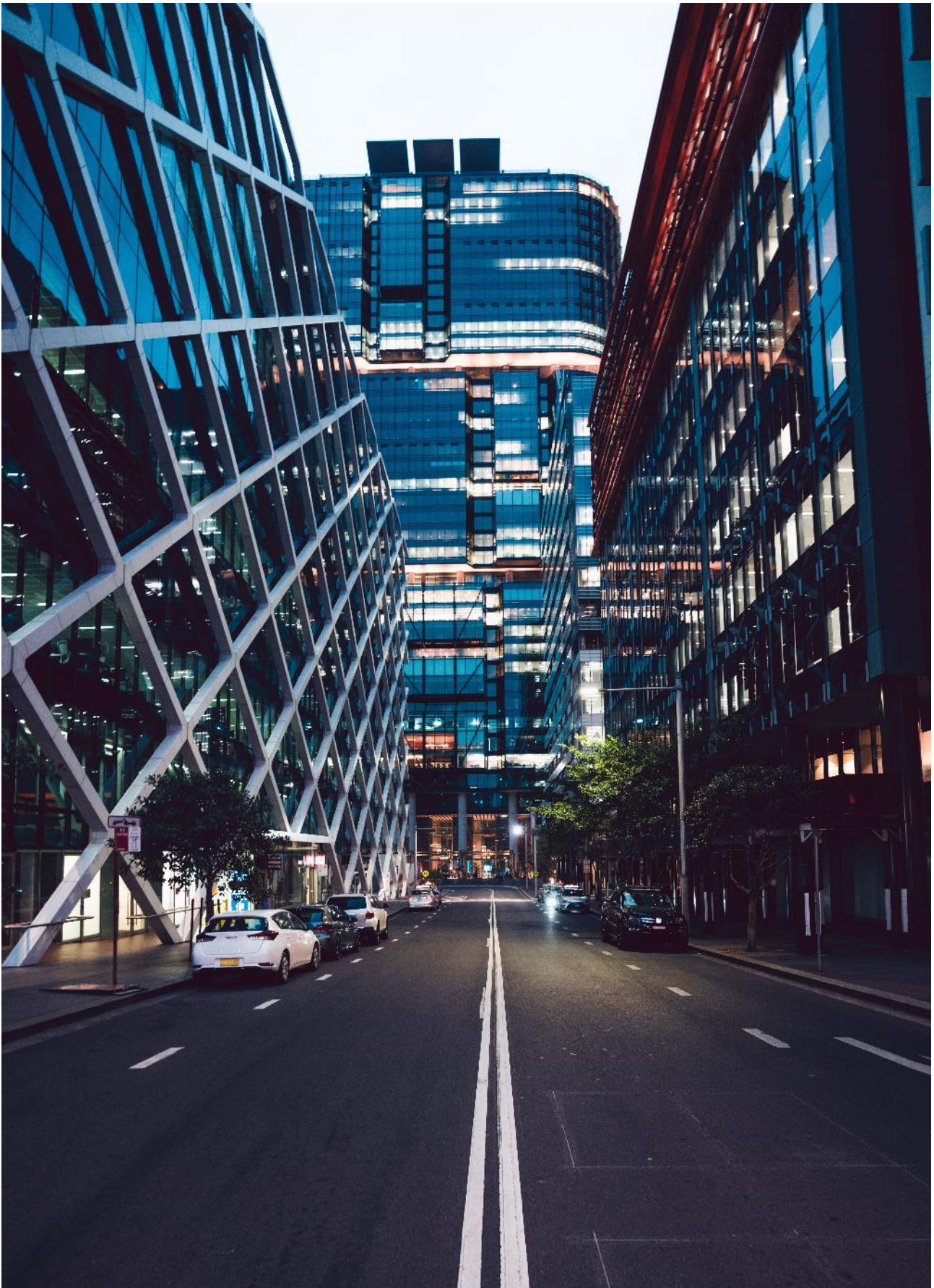
Our city needs to ensure it's a creator of ideas and technology, not just a consumer, with a focus on bridging the gap between industry and educational institutions and encouraging collaboration more broadly. We need to develop the innovation investment system and increase the concentration of the innovation economy in key precincts. We need to attract and retain talent, including fostering the pipeline of local talent currently studying in our schools and universities. We need to support job-rich industries that convert innovation and technology into valuable products and services, particularly those that will support the transition to net zero.

There are also shifts in employment, from full-time to freelance and insecure gig work. Our future workforce will need the entrepreneurial skills to craft their own career paths, and our societal and institutional systems will also need to adapt.

Small, independent high-street businesses keep our neighbourhoods lively. Many will continue to struggle in this changing environment without support such as street events, digital skills courses, and business networks and partnerships. Their evolution should include a more complex and engaging customer experience, becoming more digitally literate and working with one another to achieve economies of scale.

We also need to diversify and expand the mix of businesses and business structures in the city. We must ensure that charities, not-for-profits, mutuals and cooperatives, social enterprises and B-Corp certified organisations are well represented, along with more familiar corporate structures and small businesses. Diversity offers more choice for employees. Our city must also have the digital infrastructure to support business and personal requirements over coming decades. It will take the collective action of governments and business to keep Sydney competitive globally.

Beyond creative workers, we need to ensure that everyone can benefit from a job or their own business. We know this is not the case for many in our communities. We risk becoming a less diverse, less inclusive city and a poorer performing economy if we don't make these changes.



Shelley Street, Sydney.
Photo: Getty Images



2022 Sydney Streets program in Redfern

Photo: Adam Hollingworth@Hired Gun



UTS Tech Lab, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
Photo: Anna Zhu / UTS

2050 outcomes

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

9.1 An expanding innovation economy supports Sydney's future prosperity	9.2 The transition to a net zero economy offers new economic opportunities	9.3 An inclusive city economy provides opportunities for everyone to participate and share in its prosperity	9.4 Creativity and great experiences fuel the vitality of the city	9.5 Unique local neighbourhoods and the global city centre support thriving economic activity
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
New specialisations emerge with innovation central to the growth of Sydney's economy	Sydney is a global champion of net zero	Sydney is prosperous with a globally connected economy, with the wealth and benefits equitably distributed locally	The city has become more than a place of work and business, it is the destination for a range of great experiences day and night	The city is shaped by the unique local areas with their own identity and character – the city centre, main streets, creative and late-night precincts – each supporting thriving economic activity
Innovation precincts, including Tech Central, have grown and intensified activities, cementing Sydney's reputation as a world-leading city of innovation	Global competitiveness is maintained by moving quickly to a net zero economy	The principles of community wealth building are embedded, resulting in an inclusive and more sustainable economy	A range of creative, inclusive, fun and diverse activities enliven the city centre and local main streets enticing people to visit	Sydney is a leading local, national and international destination for business, investment and talent attraction
Major economic centres across Sydney are connected for strong, complementary growth	Businesses across all sectors are engaged and participate in the transition to a net zero economy	Opportunities for wider economic participation and more secure employment have been created	The city centre and local main streets are active throughout the day, the evening and into the night, supported by appropriate public transport options	Global connections continue to provide opportunities for local businesses and organisations
Sydney has developed a culture of experimentation as well as a workforce equipped with the skills and supporting structures to leverage new technologies, accelerating productivity and scalability	Sydney's financial and services sector supports NSW's growth as a sustainable economy powerhouse	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the City of Sydney are empowered to access pathways through education, training and employment that align with their aspirations	The city is a destination of choice providing experiences across the 24-hour economy, attracting local and global visitors	Economic, creative and residential activity coexists in diverse local neighbourhoods
The city trials new initiatives and is equipped with high-speed, fit for purpose technology and data infrastructure	New job and business opportunities come from the transition to a circular economy	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses grow and flourish Closing the Gap priority reform 5		
Monitoring progress Worker productivity in 5 knowledge and innovation intensive industries in the City of Sydney local area	Monitoring progress Sydney's position on the Global Destination Sustainability Index	Monitoring progress City of Sydney gross regional product	Monitoring progress Trips made in the Sydney city centre on public transport	Monitoring progress Business establishments employing workers in the City of Sydney local government economy
Jobs in the 5 knowledge and innovation intensive industries in the City of Sydney local area		Secure jobs in the City of Sydney local area	Domestic visitors – average number of nights stayed in City of Sydney local area	

9.1 An expanding innovation economy supports Sydney's future prosperity	9.2 The transition to a net zero economy offers new economic opportunities	9.3 An inclusive city economy provides opportunities for everyone to participate and share in its prosperity	9.4 Creativity and great experiences fuel the vitality of the city	9.5 Unique local neighbourhoods and the global city centre support thriving economic activity
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (15 to 24 years) from the City of Sydney local area who are in employment, education or training. The National Closing the Gap target is 67%. Closing the Gap target 7	International visitors – average number of nights stayed in City of Sydney local area	
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 from the City of Sydney local area who are employed. The National Closing the Gap target is 62%. Closing the Gap target 8	International visitors staying overnight in City of Sydney local area	
			City of Sydney residents attending cultural activities, events, performances, and venues	

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Thought leader
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Regulatory and standards organisations
- Residents
- Universities and other research organisations
- Cultural Institutions
- Community organisations
- Not-for-profits and NGOs

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Economic development strategy (2025–2035)
- International education action plan (2018)
- Eora Journey economic development plan (2016)
- OPEN Sydney strategy and action plan (2013–2030)
- Central Sydney planning strategy (2016–2036)
- Camperdown-Ultimo collaboration precinct: innovation & collaboration study (2019)
- Smart city strategic framework (2020)

- Community wealth building statement (in development)
- Sustainable procurement policy (2021)
- City plan 2036: local strategic planning statement (2020)
- Housing for all: City of Sydney local housing strategy (2020)
- Stretch reconciliation action plan (2020)
- Cultural strategy (2025–2035)
- A city for all: social sustainability policy and action plan (2018–2028)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses

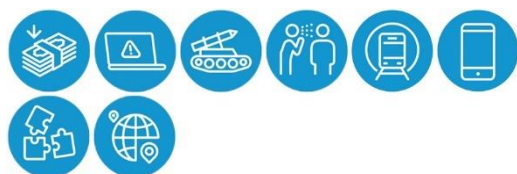




Image on previous page: Affordable housing, Portman Street, Green Square

Photo: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney

Direction 10: Housing for all

Community priorities and aspirations

Our communities want their city to be inclusive of all people, regardless of age, gender and cultural background, what they do for work or how much they earn. This is why housing affordability is a very high concern for priority communities, especially young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The availability of rental and social housing and how this is a barrier to a diverse and equitable city concerns people.

Social housing tenants and renters are concerned about their inability to make their homes more climate-resilient due to cost or rental restrictions. They want climate-resilient housing and want to ensure homes are adapted to cope with extreme weather events.

People understand housing options need to expand but not at the expense of quality. People value living in a neighbourhood that is home to people from all walks of life. They express concerns about being priced out of the market over time and losing their deep connections to place.

There is also a call for more affordable housing and subsidised creative spaces to support artists and creative workers.

They acknowledge as the city moves toward almost all new developments being apartments, the city must still cater for a diversity of household types and sizes – students and single person households as well as families, older people and even intergenerational households.

The city's future economy and if it will be able to attract and retain its workforce also concerns people. Australian businesses compete globally for talent, and people note the comparatively high cost of housing in our city could deter candidates from accepting a job. Sydney's future economic success may be linked to the cost of renting or purchasing housing in the city.

Why we need to act

All countries committed to the United Nations sustainable development goals are aiming to provide adequate, safe and affordable housing by 2030, for everyone in their communities. Australia has committed to this target, but in metropolitan Sydney including the inner city, we're not yet close to achieving this aspiration. There's much more to do if we're to achieve this goal.

Housing is a human right that provides more than shelter. It gives people access to private space that is safe, secure, affordable, healthy, accessible and well-located. Housing should be culturally appropriate, good quality, well-designed and include high technological and environmental performance.

The City of Sydney understands our communities, businesses and other interest groups expect us to take a leadership role in addressing the city's housing needs. To accommodate our future population, we must plan for a total of 173,500 dwellings by 2036, and more as the number of residents grows. In 2024, the NSW Government also imposed short term housing targets for councils to assist the state to meet its share of the National Housing Accord. The target for the City of Sydney area is 18,900 private dwellings from 2024 to 2029. New housing supply needs to include social, affordable and diverse housing.

The city's population has always been very diverse so the nature and mix of housing must continue to support this diversity. This means keeping existing low-cost housing in the area and supporting the growth of new social, affordable and diverse housing.

While the local community will remain relatively young, in the next decade we can expect a growing proportion of older people living in the inner city. Single person households are likely to remain the main housing type, but families with children are expected to be the fastest growing in coming decades. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents represent an overall younger population and have notable differences in housing needs including size, accessibility and affordability.

The quality and performance of housing in the city must also be addressed. To adapt to the effects of our changing climate, housing must meet high standards of design, construction and environmental performance. People must be able to live safely as temperatures rise by using passive design wherever possible to maintain comfort. High-performing residential buildings add to the quality of life that communities expect in a medium to high-density urban setting.

The community values well-designed, well-ventilated, energy-efficient, homes that support people's health and wellbeing. The proximity of homes to local services and public open spaces is essential. Proximity to local jobs has important economic and social benefits for individuals, households and the broader community.

The availability and affordability of housing has continued to decline, especially for those with limited capacity to pay and with extra support needs. This dire situation is worse than in previous years, which has been driven by challenges in creating new supply with increases in finance costs, construction costs and materials availability and labour shortages. At the same time, housing affordability is forecast to likely worsen in the near term due to increasing demand.

Diverse and affordable housing is needed to attract talent and investment as well as support our diverse communities, including people experiencing homelessness.

Longstanding housing issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Redfern and Waterloo areas also need to be addressed. Both suburbs hold great cultural and political significance for the community and are an entry point for people coming to the city for work opportunities, shelter and connections with community and family.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the impacts of former government policies are intergenerational. Systemic barriers, less generational wealth and lower incomes mean they often cannot invest in property, which otherwise provides the 'launch pad' for the next generation. Aged care is a priority to ensure culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and older people to maintain access to family, community and support services.

The City of Sydney recognises the significance of housing and other services being managed by Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and supports efforts to ensure future expansion of the sector locally.

The 2021 Census shows that twice as many households are renters (65%) in our area compared to the rest of the country (31%).

Housing stress occurs when more than 30% of gross income in a low-income household is spent on housing. The 2021 Census shows among all households in the local area that 33% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This increases considerably for low-income households to 69% who rent.

In comparison, 36% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in the local area who rent spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Conversely, for low-income Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, 58% who rent spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Another challenge facing renters is housing security. Reform is required to ensure long-term rental is a viable alternative to home ownership. The rights of tenants need to recognise that many renters will rent long term and even lifelong.

In a wealthy city like ours, we shouldn't have people forced into homelessness. This complex problem with complex causes, reflects poverty, inequality and the housing affordability crisis. It also points to insufficient social housing for the most vulnerable people.

With around 63,000 households in NSW on the social housing waiting list, the waiting time in 2024 for access to housing in the local area was 10 or more years for non-urgent applicants.

People without Australian residency status who are experiencing homelessness in the city are ineligible for housing assistance. In a highly unaffordable and constrained housing market, this makes them vulnerable to exploitation and exposes them to sub-standard housing.



First image: Homeless person in Woolloomooloo

Photos: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Eve Street, Erskineville

Photos: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

2050 outcomes

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

10.1 People sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness have access to adequate accommodation, services and support to meet their needs	10.2 The supply of well maintained, safe, secure and sustainable social housing is increased to support our communities	10.3 An increased supply of affordable rental and diverse housing supports our communities and the economy	10.4 Our city has a mix of housing accommodating diverse and growing communities	10.5 There is an increased supply of culturally appropriate and self-determined housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050	Sydney by 2050
Everyone has a home	High-quality housing is available for everyone	Supply of affordable rental and diverse housing supports a socially and economically diverse community	There is more housing that better meets the needs of families, intergenerational households, older people, people with disability, students, lone person and co-living households and other cohorts.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are no longer displaced from the local area
Investment and collaborative action have resulted in accommodation, services and resources matching or exceeding the demand for them	Services and social supports are in place to enable people to live with independence and dignity	A strong community housing sector continues to grow supply of affordable rental and diverse housing	Homes built between now and 2050 are comfortable, healthy, cost efficient and resilient to live in	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have increased access to self-determined culturally appropriate housing
	Properties and their surrounds continue to be improved and maintained to a high standard	Collaboration across government contributes to an increased supply of affordable rental and diverse housing across Greater Sydney	Renting is a viable, secure and long-term housing option	Increased supply of culturally appropriate and self-determined social and affordable rental housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
	Connections to local neighbourhoods and communities are preserved when redevelopment takes place		Homes are close to jobs, local services, public open spaces and public transport	The Aboriginal community housing sector has grown its capacity to provide housing Closing the Gap priority reform 2
Monitoring progress People sleeping rough in the City of Sydney local area on the night of the annual street count	Monitoring progress Private dwellings that are to be social housing in the City of Sydney local area. Target of 7.5% by 2036	Monitoring progress Private dwellings that are affordable rental housing units and / or diverse housing dwellings in the City of Sydney local area. Target of 7.5% by 2036	Monitoring progress Private dwellings in the City of Sydney local area. Target 156,000 by 2036	Monitoring progress Projects led by or partnered with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to provide culturally appropriate housing (supported by the City of Sydney through funding, or discounted land or asset sales)
People in crisis accommodation in the City of Sydney local area on the night of the annual street count			Non private dwellings (boarding houses, student accommodation, residential aged care services) in the City of Sydney local area. Target of 17,500 by 2036	Number and proportion of Aboriginal households in the local area that live in affordable housing provided by St George Community Housing, Bridge Housing, and City West Housing

City of Sydney's role

- Leader
- Provider
- Convenor and facilitator
- Planner
- Capacity builder
- Advocate
- Networker
- Funder
- Role model
- Communicator

Key partners and collaborators

- Neighbouring local government authorities
- Community housing providers
- Housing developers
- Community organisations
- Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- Business community
- Australian Government
- NSW Government
- Homes NSW
- Peak bodies and member-based organisations
- Residents
- Not-for-profits and NGOs

Supporting strategies and plans

These strategies and plans provide the detailed actions to achieve the goal of this strategic direction:

- Economic development strategy (2025–2035)
- Cultural strategy (2025–2035)
- A city for all: social sustainability policy and action plan (2018–2028)
- A city for all: homelessness action plan (2020)
- City plan 2036: local strategic planning statement (2020)
- Housing for all: City of Sydney local housing strategy (2020)
- Planning for net zero energy buildings (2021)

Note, these strategies and plans are reviewed regularly. During this community strategic plan's timeframe, some may be updated, and new strategies or plans may be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development goals



Responding to major acute shocks and chronic stresses



Redfern terraces

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Transformative project ideas

After we engaged our communities, we developed 10 transformative project ideas. These ideas are outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision.

The ideas were developed with prominent architects, landscape architects and urban designers. They demonstrate how future public space and infrastructure projects could achieve our vision for a green, global and connected Sydney by 2050.

The projects propose long-term solutions by using creative responses to the opportunities and challenges facing our city. Many are refreshed ideas from our original Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision, while some are new.

They respond directly to the priorities and aspirations of our communities – a city where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures are visible, for example. These ideas will help us become a greener city that is regenerative and innovative with thriving arts and culture.

The ideas bring the community's vision to life, drawing on the strategic directions and actions to reimagine a future city for all. They acknowledge that long-term infrastructure and development requires commitment from all levels of government, businesses and our residents.

These ideas illustrate how our vision for a future Sydney could be realised:

1. Eora Journey – Yananurala
2. Three linked city squares
3. The green city – increasing city greening
4. City space improvement program
5. The water city – making more of our harbour
6. Connecting Green Square
7. Metro as catalyst
8. Building on housing for all
9. Making space for culture
10. Reimagining our community assets



Loftus Street public domain upgrade (looking south)
Concept by HASSELL

1. Eora Journey – Yananurala

Yananurala, the harbour walk will share and celebrate new and old stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people along the Sydney Harbour foreshore.



bara, Judy Watson (2021) Photo: Chris Southwood, City of Sydney
Monument for the Eora above Dubbagullee (Bennelong Point)

2. Three linked city squares

The 3 squares at Circular Quay, Town Hall and Central linked by a transformed George Street will provide more space for public life in the heart of our city. These public spaces are essential to ensure our city remains liveable and sustains its role as a global economic centre.



Town Hall Square – Sydney’s civic heart

Concept by Bates Smart, Matthew Pullinger & Paddock Landscape Architects

3. The green city – increasing city greening

Three ideas for a green city – green avenues, the laneway commons and expanding Sydney's lungs at Moore Park. They illustrate what our city streets and open spaces could become. A future with more space for people and greening to reduce heat and enable better community wellbeing and health.



Green avenues – Park Street (looking east)
Concept by Bates Smart and Matthew Pullinger

4. City space improvement program

Temporary and permanent initiatives to transform road space into public space for people in Sydney's city centre. This could include timed road closures and temporary use of parking for lunchtime activation and outdoor dining, leading to more permanent transformations that benefit public life in the city centre.



Loftus Street public domain upgrade (looking south)

Concept by HASSELL

5. The water city – making more of our harbour

Swimming in the harbour is an ambitious idea that symbolises a water sensitive city. Rehabilitation, protection and good management of Sydney Harbour in the future could create more opportunities for recreation on the foreshore. This would support the environment and the wellbeing of our communities and our economy.



Pirrama Park minimal intervention vision

Concept by Andrew Burges Architects

6. Connecting Green Square

The eastern transit corridor links Green Square town centre and train station to a future metro station in Zetland. This corridor could support light rail, emerging trackless tram technologies or zero emission bus services. An extension could connect Sydney's city centre and other neighbourhoods.



Connecting Green Square

Ethan Rohloff (base image) / City of Sydney

7. Metro as catalyst

Metro is the best way to connect current and future innovation, knowledge and employment centres to each other, the city centre and to centres across metropolitan Sydney. Well located metro stations with bus interchanges would provide better overall trip experiences.



Sydney Metro West – Pyrmont

Image: Sydney Metro

8. Building on housing for all

More models to increase the supply of affordable housing in Sydney are needed because like other global cities, Sydney is becoming increasingly divided between those who can afford housing and those who cannot.



Affordable housing on Hansard Street, Zetland

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

9. Making space for culture

Making space for culture is a two-part strategy for creating and preserving cultural and creative space in Sydney with precinct revitalisation and setting up a creative land trust. A proactive and innovative approach to the creation and preservation of affordable space for culture and creativity is needed to ensure the long-term future of creative workers in our city.



Art Month workshop at Pine Street Creative Arts Centre

Photo: City of Sydney

10. Reimagining our community assets

Reimagining our community assets explores new ideas for how our communities can use existing ones. We want to work with our communities to understand how facilities, halls and open spaces can be transformed for future uses.



Reimagining and activating Sydney Town Hall's edges
Concept by City of Sydney

The communities we serve

Our commitment to engage with the communities we serve

Community participation is a guiding principle of effective and accountable local government. We engage the communities that we serve – the people, organisations and businesses that have a stake in our city's future and who are impacted by the decisions the City of Sydney makes.

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

Defining community

The *Local Government Act* requires councils to engage 'their local community'. Defining the local communities the City of Sydney serves is complex.

More than one million people – residents, workers, students, businesses and visitors – spend time in the local area, every day.

Sydney's role as a state capital and global city sees a mix of organisations based in our local area. These include cultural organisations, educational institutions, international tourism sector, corporate headquarters, peak bodies, advocacy groups and government departments. The city is also made up of non-resident property owners with properties large and small.

These communities are diverse. The people who rely on Sydney as their place to live, work, study, do business, access services and visit are also connected to other places around the world. The City of Sydney recognises our responsibilities that are created through these connections between our communities and other communities.

Our local communities are all these people and organisations who have a stake in the decisions the City of Sydney makes.

Recognising diverse communities

One way to understand the complexity of communities in the City of Sydney area is how these communities of people relate to an issue or decision. The types of communities described below overlap and intersect one another.

Communities of place

Many of our projects aim to improve places. Often the most interested and impacted communities are those who live or work around these projects. For example, when consulting on improving a neighbourhood park, we aim to reach residents, property owners, local schools or childcare services and nearby businesses.

Communities of place also include groups of people who hold a particular connection to a place due to its historical or cultural significance. Examples include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with Redfern, people of diverse sexualities and genders with Oxford Street and diverse Asian cultures with Haymarket and Chinatown.

People may also closely associate with the activities that take place there, for example members of sporting, community garden or cultural groups. They might belong to less formal groups, such as skaters who use a skate park, or people visiting their local library or community centre.

Communities of interest

Communities of interest organise around an issue or activity. These may include:

- different business sectors, such as tech startups or hospitality
- large corporates or owners of small local businesses
- professions we engage with such as architects and urban planners
- peak bodies, advocacy and industry groups such as the NSW Council of Social Services, People with Disability Australia, Property Council or Committee for Sydney
- not-for-profit organisations and services with a common purpose such as sustainability or affordable housing.

Communities of interest may form advocacy groups and networks the City of Sydney can tap into, such as business chambers, resident action groups and interagency networks. These communities may also convene around a shared activity including sporting or recreational clubs, bushcare and gardening groups, cultural and creative communities, and informal activities like dog walking.

Communities of identity

These communities define themselves. They include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ communities and multicultural communities. It's important to remember there is diversity in these communities meaning there may be smaller groups within them.

They may gather around cultural and religious beliefs. Communities of identity may also associate by age, for example groups of young people or older people. Sometimes these groups form because of shared experiences, for example social housing residents who live in a particular neighbourhood.

Communities of need

The pandemic reminded us that the needs of people must take priority. In 2020 the City of Sydney community recovery plan survey found that 74% of people agreed it's 'very important that we support people that are vulnerable during the pandemic'.

These may be people facing food insecurity, housing stress or homelessness and economic hardship. They may have difficulty accessing services including digital information channels. These are people who need the City of Sydney to work in a way that ensures their vulnerability is understood and addressed so they can take part in daily life and our decision-making processes.

"Hopefully there will be more kindness and tolerance now."

— City of Sydney community recovery plan survey respondent (May 2020)

Communities of the future

Perhaps the most important communities to consider in our decision making are the communities of the future. Their perspectives are often difficult to consider.

Two ways we can try to include the perspectives of communities of the future in our engagement are by:

- consulting children and young people who will live with the impacts of our decision making the longest

asking the people who we consult to consider the needs and perspectives of those who may not be here yet.

“We are the ones who are going to have to live through the things we choose right now.”

– 2050 Youth Summit participant

Government and institutional stakeholders

The City of Sydney works in an environment of other levels of government with overlapping or complementary responsibilities. We consult each other when we develop and implement our strategies and projects. State government agencies also consult communities in our local area. When this happens its important people are clear about who and which level of government – local, state or federal – is responsible for making decisions.

We have Principles of Cooperation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council respecting their status under the *Land Rights Act 1983*.

We engage with educational institutions including the tertiary sector, schools and early learning centres that provide important community connections in our local area. An example is our memorandums of understanding with the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Sydney.

We’re working more with health providers to understand community needs, respond to urgent situations and plan for the needs of future communities.

We work collaboratively with state government agencies and local services in developing shared approaches to support social housing residents across the city and to ensure their voices and needs are heard and understood, particularly with urban renewal projects.

The City of Sydney works with the 33 Greater Sydney councils on issues that cross local government boundaries on the Resilient Sydney strategy and programs focusing on economic, environmental, cultural and governance development.

We also work with state government agencies to inform Greater Sydney and state level policies, plans and strategies. We champion engagement with communities to better inform approaches to land use planning, infrastructure provision, program development and city-wide targets and benchmarking.

We’re a member of national and international groups including the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, global Resilient Cities Network and C40 Cities Climate Change Leadership Group.

A snapshot of our city

The City of Sydney local area is home to an estimated 231,086 residents (June 2023).

The area’s Gross Regional Product is estimated at \$141.7 billion (2022/23), which represents 20.8% of NSW’s Gross State Product.

In the 2022 floor space and employment survey, 520,000 jobs were counted across 21,500 businesses in the local area.

Demographic profile

City of Sydney residents are relatively young, with a median age of around 34 years (2021). This compares with a median age of around 37 years for residents across Greater Sydney.

The fastest growing household type in the local area is residents living alone (41.1%) in one-person households (2021). Almost half (47.4%) of city residents live in family households with a partner and/or children or other relatives. Group households accommodate another 11.6% of residents.

City of Sydney residents are well-educated with 58.1% holding a bachelor's degree or higher qualification (2021), with a further 11.7% attending university. This compares to 36.3% with bachelor or higher degree qualifications across Greater Sydney and 5.8% attending university (2021).

There are more professionals among City of Sydney residents (2021) at 42.4% than any other occupation. Managers are the next largest occupational group at 18.7%. This compares with Greater Sydney where professionals represent 29.9% and managers represent 15.5%.

Cultural diversity

More than half (52.1%) of the city's residents were born overseas (2021), with 35.9% of these residents arriving in Australia between 2016 and 2021. Residents born in eastern, south-eastern, and southern Asia now make up more than one quarter (25.9%) of the city's population.

More than one third (37.5%) of residents speak a language other than English at home. The most prevalent is Mandarin followed by Thai, Cantonese, Spanish, Indonesian and Vietnamese.

Work and transport

The labour force participation rate among City of Sydney residents (2021) is 74.2%. This represents the number of people working or looking for work, as a percentage of the total residential population aged over 15 years. In this group 94.4% are employed and 5.6% are looking for work.

Almost two thirds (63.5%) of local resident workers (2021) are employed locally.

On 10 August 2021 (Census), City of Sydney residents said they travelled to work by the following means:

- 14.1% by private car (as a passenger or driver)
- 9.5% by public transport
- 10.9% by bike or walking
- 54.2% worked at home.

Please note, the 2021 Census was carried out during pandemic restrictions, so data on mode of transport to work may not reflect typical travel patterns.

Housing

City of Sydney residents are mainly renting their home privately (57.6%). A further 33.5% of households are purchasing or fully own their home, and 7.3% live in social housing (2021).



Sydney City Farm in Sydney Park, St Peters

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Green
Global
Connected