

Committee  
for  
Sydney

# Year in Review 2020

October 2020





**Thank you to our all of our  
members and sponsors.  
You've helped us to create  
significant impact this year.**

**"The Committee for Sydney sets the standard for forward-looking, but still practical policy thinking. The Committee is a great champion for our city."**

**The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP**  
Premier of NSW

# Chairman's message

**This has been a year of significant disruption, change, and uncertainty for people in Sydney. The pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of Sydneysiders and on the social, cultural, and economic life of the city.**

In many ways the pandemic has drawn attention to Sydney's underlying strengths and advantages – effective governance, an excellent health system, a strong economic base, good collaboration across sectors, and strong local communities.

However, the crisis has also drawn attention to challenges we have known about for a long time – mobility and congestion, the provision of social and affordable housing, access to public spaces, and the spatial nature of inequality in Sydney. We have also seen particular challenges for a global city in a time of international crisis and local disruption. These can be seen in important sectors for Sydney such as education, tourism, and hospitality.

Against this background, the Committee for Sydney matters more than ever. Sydney has an opportunity to emerge stronger from the current crisis, driving recovery by building on its strengths and genuinely addressing its challenges. The Committee has an important role to play in this – advocating for the policies and actions that will deliver the best outcomes for the city.

The members of the Committee make up an important community of purpose. It has been wonderful to see members staying connected and engaged with the Committee's work throughout the year, sharing insights,



responses and ideas, and focusing early on our joint contribution to Sydney's recovery. I would like to thank all of you for that commitment and invite you to stay with us for the important work ahead.

Gabriel and the team have done an extraordinary job this year, keeping us connected, relevant and influential, despite the challenging environment. Thanks to them, the Executive Committee, and our Taskforce Chairs for their efforts and commitment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several vertical strokes followed by a long horizontal line.

Michael Rose AM



# CEO's introduction

**We will remember 2020 for the rest of our lives: the year of COVID-19, the sadness of social distancing, the first truly global crisis since WW2, the start of a deep recession.**



When 2020 began, we were working on solving a set of long-standing problems facing Sydney. Some were problems of success (congestion, growth pressures, the high cost of housing). Some were problems of procrastination (ramping down greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning the economy away from fossil fuels). And some were simply hard (inequality, finding the money to continue expanding public transport).

We were ready for a big year, in other words.

And then COVID hit.

We watched as millions of people around the world fell sick, hospitals filled up, and many people died. We isolated ourselves as best we could and we adjusted. We changed the way we worked and the way we interacted with one another.

Along the way, we witnessed something remarkable: Australia, and especially New South Wales, managed the pressures of the moment. Navigating between the dual crises of controlling the pandemic and supporting the economy, government found a way to keep most people safe and keep most people employed.

We were reminded of the virtues of transparent governance, of relying on scientific expertise to inform policy, and of providing healthcare to everyone.

The Committee for Sydney understood early-on that we had an essential role to play in laying the groundwork for social and economic recovery. Even during the first days of lockdown, we began a series of urgent conversations with business leaders across Sydney and with our partners in government, to try to understand what the options were for supporting people through the economic "hibernation" of the first phase, and then moving as quickly as possible into recovery. While our other projects continued, COVID gave a new focus for almost everything.

We have worked closely with all levels of government this year to develop a framework for recovery and to advance a series of practical recommendations.

We have tried to ask the right questions about how the world will change because of COVID-19, and how Sydney will change.

And throughout, we have looked for the hidden opportunities in this crisis – to accelerate changes that will move Sydney forward, or to convert Australia's global reputation as a safe and responsible country into long-term economic benefit.

All of this has depended, crucially, on the engagement and financial support of our members. We have been deeply gratified to see almost all of our member companies dig deep, contributing ideas and investing in the Committee for Sydney, even as they face serious economic headwinds. This support has allowed us to not only continue our work but to expand our impact. Thank you.

As I write these words, we don't know how much longer the pandemic will last, or what the world will look like on the other side of the COVID. But we will be there with you, throughout this process, to help ensure that Sydney comes back stronger than ever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel Metcalf'.

Gabriel Metcalf





# Impact



## COVID recovery strategy

As Sydney went into lockdown, the Committee was already laying plans for what would come after. As it became clear just how significant the economic hit was going to be, our work took on greater urgency.

Moving from early advocacy on the Australian Government's income replacement scheme, which we think was largely done correctly, to the urgent task of coming up with COVID-safe protocols for every industry, the Committee played a key role in marshalling the information and the arguments to support a pragmatic approach to managing through the crisis.

We developed an 11-point recovery strategy that has been influential across government.

Some of the key areas of focus include:

- massive investments in infrastructure as fiscal stimulus
- acceleration of planning approvals
- reform of the taxation system to enable growth
- a new approach to global talent attraction
- expansion of R&D to reach or exceed the OECD average
- sector strategies for universities, the visitor economy, the experience sector, and advanced manufacturing.

Sydney is faced with the task of rebuilding its economy from the depths of a global recession. But we have everything we need to be successful. The Committee as a trusted partner to government is helping to formulate the set of tools and interventions that are making a difference.

## Major transport infrastructure

Sydney's transport infrastructure boom continues unabated, with many new projects coming to the fore, but equally a number of signature projects coming to fruition. Building on years of advocacy by the Committee, we used COVID recovery as a reason to keep going.

### Key milestones

- Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail opened
- Sydney Metro City and Southwest tunnelling completed
- Western Sydney Airport major design and construction packages shortlisted
- Western Sydney Airport Metro line final alignment and station locations announced
- West Metro engineering design and assurance appointed; tunnelling contractors shortlisted
- Parramatta Light Rail major construction started
- Continued modernisation of the rail fleet with new trains rolling off the shelf

**"The Committee is a great advocate for the Australian university sector because it understands how our world-leading education and research create the knowledge and drive the innovation that are key to our future prosperity."**

Belinda Hutchinson  
Chancellor, University of Sydney

## Public space renaissance

This year, more than most, has reminded Sydneysiders how important public spaces are. Working closely with local councils and the Place Design and Public Space group within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the Committee has been a champion of investing in more, higher quality public spaces across our city.

### Key milestones

- Public Space Ideas Competition — attracting 531 entries from across Greater Sydney
- Streets as Shared Spaces program to deliver \$15 million of street transformations across NSW
- 50 Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands
- Federation Harbour Trust review completed
- Formation of Greater Sydney Parklands
- Government reforms brought dining and drinking outdoors into city streets and plazas

## Restarting the 24-hour economy

Sydney's nightlife entered an exciting new era towards the end of 2019, only to be decimated by the pandemic. The experience sector is fighting for its survival, even while we lay plans for the recovery.

### Key milestones

- Repeal of the lockouts
- Creation of the first-ever 24-hour Economy Strategy by NSW Government
- Night-Time Economy Exposure Bill, to remove restrictive red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy

## Making cycling easier in Sydney

While cities like New York and London have worked for more than a decade to retrofit their streets to enable cycling, Sydney has fallen behind. We launched a major campaign in 2020 to start the long work of building out a physically separated network of cycleways, to provide Sydneysiders with a new option for getting around.

### Key milestones

- Rapid roll-out of over 20km of pop-up cycleways in Sydney
- Development of a Strategic Business Case for first part of Sydney's Principle Bicycle Network
- Establishment of a "mode agnostic" structure within Transport for NSW to ensure cycling and walking receive appropriate priority

## Progress on planning

This was a big year for planning – both reforms to the planning system and approvals of new district plans.

### Key milestones

- Local Governments across Sydney completed Local Strategic Planning Statements to guide the growth and change of their local areas
- Planning System Acceleration Program to fast-track planning approvals in the wake of COVID
- Creation of the Planning Delivery Unit to eliminate delays in the planning system
- Greener Spaces design guide released
- Draft Housing Strategy released
- State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) on Housing Diversity released
- Pyrmont Place Strategy published
- Western Gateway developments at the Central Innovation Precinct approved

## Cultural and tourism investment

Sydney is not resting on its laurels when it comes to cultural investment, with a raft of important developments coming to the fore this year, ranging from sport, to art, to a new Sydney Fish Market.

- Parramatta Powerhouse major cultural precinct design selected
- Construction underway on Sydney Modern expansion
- Construction underway on the new Sydney Football Stadium
- New Sydney Fish Market approved and contractors shortlisted
- \$50 million Cultural Renewal Fund in response to the impact of COVID on the cultural sector



# Research



Australia fell into recession earlier this year for the first time in 28 years and the International Monetary Fund predicts that in 2020, Australia's GDP will contract by 4.5%. Meanwhile, Sydney has all the pre-conditions for a successful innovation ecosystem, yet lags in terms of outputs. This report delivers 18 recommendations to boost our innovation economy across areas including increasing investment in R&D, making it easier to create new companies and good jobs, attracting top talent, and skilling Australians.



A deep dive into Sydney's high streets that help define so many Sydney neighbourhoods. We celebrate these streets for everything they can offer – convenience, amenity, and the simple pleasures of walking around and people watching. This report is a call for reviving, reclaiming, and revitalising Sydney's high streets and turning them back into a cherished part of daily life.

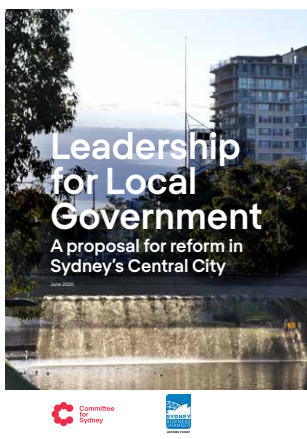




An 11-point recovery strategy for Sydney to bounce back from COVID, including infrastructure investment, removing barriers to investment, attracting global talent, supporting universities, stimulating domestic tourism and a just and green recovery.

**"I am a great supporter of the Committee for Sydney. The Committee's research and policy work is innovative, rigorous and thought-provoking. We are fortunate to have them as part of the policy conversation in Australia."**

**David Thodey, Chairman, CSIRO**



Parramatta is planned to be the "second CBD" for Sydney. To make the most of this incredible transformation, we believe Parramatta would benefit from a change to its governance structure. Together with the Western Sydney Business Chamber, we released this report that proposes the city moves to a directly elected Mayor along with other changes, to be recognised by raising the profile of the local government area through a "City of Parramatta Act".



This report explores Vienna's approach to designing a city with and for women, and proposed recommendations to Sydney's decision makers to similarly support a city that works for women.

# Submissions



Review of the Planning Framework for the Western Harbour Precinct including the Pyrmont Peninsula	September 2019
Review of Prices for Sydney Water Corporation from 1 July 2020	October 2019
NSW Review of Federal Financial Relations	November 2019
Alexandria to Moore Park, Stage 1 Project Review of Environmental Factors	December 2019
The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities inquiry into options for financing faster rail	December 2019
Independent review of Sydney Harbour Federation Trust	January 2020
Treasury Laws Amendment (Research and Development Tax Incentive) Bill 2019	March 2020
Western Sydney Aerotropolis Planning Package	March 2020
A Housing Strategy for NSW – Discussion Paper	July 2020
Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020	August 2020
Review of Infrastructure Contributions System in NSW	August 2020
Housing Diversity State Environmental Planning Policy	September 2020
Pyrmont Place Strategy Review	September 2020



# Media

Media is a key channel for the Committee to promote ideas and thought leadership. We work across print, broadcast, and digital media to provoke debate and discussion and comment on major issues affecting Sydney.

## Key statistics

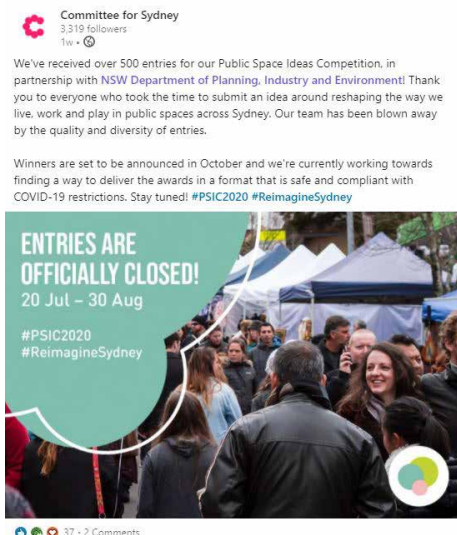
**113 unique media mentions** (Oct 19–Sept 20)

**4,514 Twitter followers** (increase of 5% since Oct 19)

**3,277 LinkedIn followers** (increase of 32% since Oct 19)

Our work has been covered in a range of media outlets including:

- ABC TV & Radio
- *Australian Financial Review*
- Channel 7 News
- Channel 9 News
- Channel 10 News
- *Infrastructure Magazine*
- *The Australian*
- *The Daily Telegraph*
- *The Filth Estate*
- *The Guardian*
- SBS
- Sky News Australia
- *Sydney Morning Herald*
- 2GB.



## Headlines

Urgent reform needed for economic bounce back: Committee for Sydney report (*The Australian*, 20 July)

'Untapped ideas': Popularity of parks during COVID sparks public space revolution (*SMH*, 20 July)

Calls for face masks grow as restrictions ease on transport system (*SMH*, 1 July)

Bike lanes in demand as cycling is 'rediscovered' (*AFR*, 14 June)

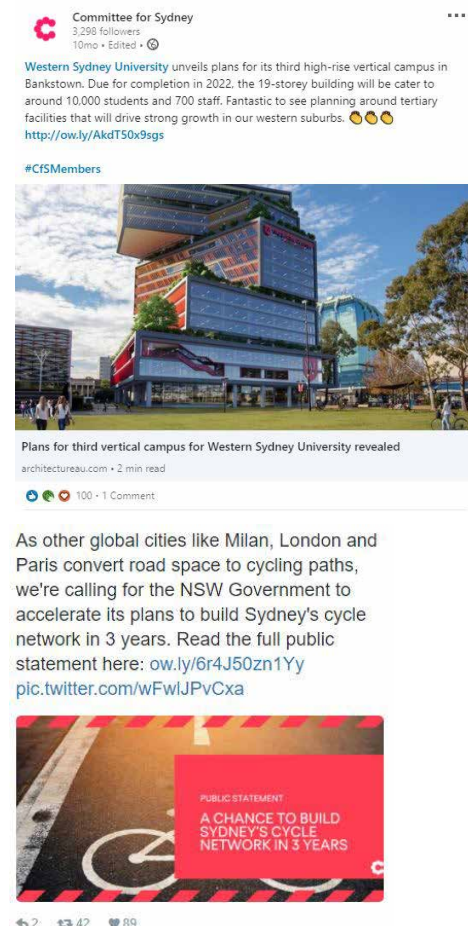
Coronavirus NSW: How we can still live in cities after social distancing (*Daily Telegraph*, 20 April)

Committee for Sydney urges government to fast-track transport projects (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 April)

Thriving high streets give communities 'pride and identity' (*SMH*, 2 Feb)

How trains are helping Australia rethink cities (*AFR*, 11 Jan)

Sydney is admired by the world but let down by high costs, bad nightlife and lack of narrative (*SMH*, Nov 17)



# Events



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**Total events held:** 109

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**Taskforces:** 24

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**Total event attendees:** over 7,400

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**In person events:** over 2,400 people attended 50 face-to-face events held pre-COVID

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**Webinars:** over 11,000 registered to attend 59 webinars from mid-March 2020

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**YOY comparison:** activity increased by 58% (40 events)

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**"Great cities need great advocates and the Committee does a fantastic job promoting Sydney and helping it to be the greatest city in the world."**

**The Hon. Dominic Perrotet MP, NSW Treasurer**



## Event highlights



### CFS LIVE

#### Snapshot

- 35 CfS LIVE webinars held (average 2 per week since April 2020)
- 49 guest speakers, 16 of these international guests
- Speakers include: Richard Florida, Greg Clark, senior NSW Government representatives – the Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Planning and Public Space, Minister for Customer Service
- Global reach: Insights from London, San Francisco, Toronto, New York, Singapore and beyond
- 9,195 people registered to tune in
- Average of over 260 attendees per webinar
- More than 760 audience questions asked



### Sydney as a 24-hour economy

#### Snapshot:

- Over 50 guests
- Discussion about NSW Parliament's Select Committee report on Sydney's Night Time Economy and Government plans to support a 24-hour economy
- Speaker: Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres
- Hosted by ARUP



### International Women's Day, 6 March 2020

#### Snapshot:

- Over 230 attendees
- Launch of Greater Sydney Women's Safety Charter
- Speakers: Lucy Turnbull the then Chief Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission; Alice Rummery, Youth Activist Leader with Plan International; Elizabeth Mildwater, Deputy Secretary, Greater Sydney at Transport for NSW
- Sponsors – Scentre Group, NAB, Daily Telegraph

**Cities have never been more important, but optimising and sustaining their value requires civic as well as political leadership. The Committee for Sydney plays an invaluable role in connecting leaders across the region, and connecting Sydney to the network of leading cities all over the world, both to learn from them and to share the lessons of Sydney's innovations and successes.**

**Prof Greg Clark CBE FAcSS**  
**Senior Advisor and Global Head of Future Cities and New Industries to HSBC Bank**

# Partners and Sponsors

## Innovation Fund Partners

Innovation Fund Partners provide core financial support for the Committee's full annual research program. We are excited to work with six partners and thank them for their leadership in this space.



## Event series sponsors

Cities



Culture



Mobility



## Event sponsors

Smart City Awards 2019: PAYCE, PwC, UTS, KJA, Thales

End of Year drinks 2019: Stockland

International Women's Day 2020: NAB, Scentre Group, The Daily Telegraph

Build to rent boardroom lunch: Coronation

## Report partners

*Unleashing the Innovation Economy*: EY



# Members



Our members are essential to the output and impact of the Committee. We are funded by a group of Sydney's leading corporations, government departments, and cultural institutions. Our differences are our strength; our passion for Sydney is our driving force.

We are proud to represent over 140 members and work with them to develop innovative ideas and solutions to make our city the best place in the world to live, work and play. These organisations represent over 250,000 jobs in NSW and 440,000 jobs in Australia.

Overwhelmingly, their number one reason for supporting the Committee to the ability to shape the future of Sydney. Invested in the future of Greater Sydney, we collaborate to develop solutions to some of our city's biggest challenges, and advocate for a better future.

## 2020 performance feedback

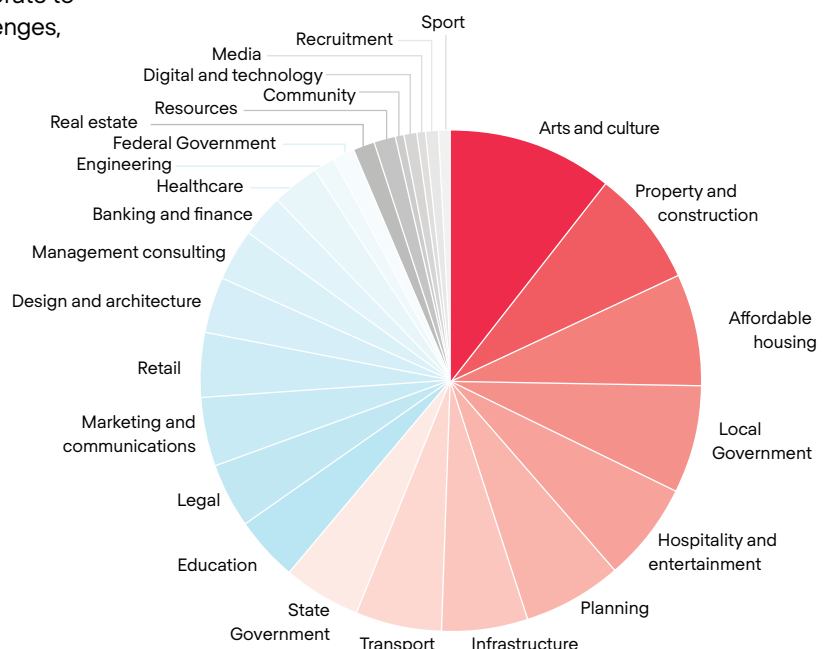
**Advocacy:** 90% rated this very strong or strong

**Research:** 88% rated this very strong or strong

**Taskforces:** 87% rated these very strong or strong

**Events:** 87% rated these very strong or strong

**CFS LIVE:** 85% rated these very strong or strong



## Our supporters

Accenture  
Accor  
AECOM Australia Pty Ltd  
Airbnb  
Allens  
Amazon Web Services  
Aqualand  
Arcadis  
Architectus  
Art Gallery of NSW  
Arup Pty Ltd  
Australian National Maritime Museum  
Australian Turf Club  
Bangarra Dance Theatre  
BaptistCare  
BESydney  
Blacktown City Council  
BlueCHP  
Bridge Housing  
Brookfield  
Campbelltown City Council  
Captain Cook Cruises  
Celestino  
Charter Hall  
City of Canterbury Bankstown Council  
City of Parramatta  
City of Sydney  
City West Housing  
Clayton Utz  
Cochlear  
Coles  
Community Housing Ltd  
Compass Housing Services  
Connect Macquarie Park and North Ryde  
Corrs Chambers Westgarth  
Cox Architecture  
Create NSW  
CSRIO  
Cultural Capital  
Deloitte  
Destination NSW  
Dexus  
DLA Piper  
Elton Consulting  
Ethos Urban  
Evolve Housing  
EY  
Five at Heart

Georges River Council  
Gilbert and Tobin  
GoGet  
Grimshaw Architects  
HASSELL  
Heart Foundation  
Hoyne  
Hume Community Housing Association  
ICC Sydney  
Imagination  
Inner West Council  
Investa Office Management Pty Ltd  
Ipsos Australia & New Zealand  
ISPT (WSQ Retail)  
Jacobs  
JLL  
John Holland Group  
Keolis Downer  
Kinesis  
KJA  
KPMG  
Laing O'Rourke Australia Construction Pty Limited  
Landcom  
Lendlease Development  
Link Housing  
Liverpool City Council  
Luna Park Sydney  
Macquarie Corporate Holdings Pty Limited  
Mastercard  
McKinsey & Company  
Mecone  
MinterEllison  
Mirvac  
Monogram Partners  
Mott MacDonald  
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
NAB  
Newgate Communications  
News Corp Australia  
Night Time Industries Association  
NRMA  
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
NSW Land and Housing Corporation  
NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet  
NSW Ports  
oOhmedia  
Origin Energy





Outdoor Media Association  
PAYCE Consolidated  
Plenary Group  
Poulos Brothers  
PwC  
RobertsDay  
Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust  
RPS Group  
Scentre Group  
Sculpture by the Sea  
SGS Economics and Planning  
SMEC  
South Western Sydney Local Health District  
SSROC  
St George Community Housing  
Stockland  
Sydney Airport  
Sydney Community Foundation  
Sydney Dance Company  
Sydney Festival  
Sydney Fish Market  
Sydney Fringe Festival  
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust  
Sydney Living Museums  
Sydney Local Health District

Sydney Opera House  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra  
Sydney Theatre Company  
Sydney Water  
Sydney Writers' Festival  
TAFE NSW  
Thales  
The Star Entertainment Group  
The University of Sydney  
Tract  
Transdev Australasia  
Transport for NSW  
Uber Australia PTY LTD (Sydney)  
University of Technology Sydney  
University of Wollongong  
UNSW  
Urbis  
Veolia  
Western Sydney University  
Westpac  
Willoughby City Council  
Woolworths  
WSP Australia Pty Ltd  
WT Partnership

## Leadership

### Executive Committee members

Michael Rose AM, Chairman

Kate Jordan, General Counsel, Origin Energy

Martin Blake, Lead Partner, KPMG

Virginia Briggs, Partner, MinterEllison

Prof. Attila Brungs, Vice-Chancellor & President,  
University of Technology Sydney (joined October 2019)

Dorte Ekelund, Principal Advisor – Smart Cities, SMEC

Sally Fielke, General Manager Corporate Affairs, Coles  
(resigned May 2020)

Kevin George, Executive General Manager – Office, Dexus

Prof. Barney Glover AO, Vice-Chancellor & University  
President, Western Sydney University  
(resigned October 2019)

Nicholas Gray, Managing Director – The Australian, NSW &  
Prestige, News Corp Australia (joined August 2020)

Sue Horlin, Managing Partner – Sydney, PwC (joined  
October 2019)

Simon Kennedy, Partner, McKinsey (joined August 2020)

Lyn Lewis-Smith, CEO, BESydney

Sally Loane, CEO, Financial Services Council  
(resigned April 2020)

Rohan Lund, Group Chief Executive, NRMA  
(resigned October 2019)

Larry McGrath, Non-Executive Director, John Holland Rail

David Rolls, National Development Director – Property,  
Lendlease

James Rosenwax, Managing Director, AECOM Buildings +  
Places, ANZ, AECOM

Charlie Taylor, Director, McKinsey & Company  
(resigned August 2020)

Siobhan Toohill, Head of Group Sustainability & Community,  
Westpac

Gabrielle Trainor AO, Board Director, Western Sydney  
University (joined August 2020)

Brian Tyson, Managing Partner, Newgate Communications

Michael Wilkins, Managing Director – Sport, Wagering &  
Gaming, News Corp (resigned August 2020)

## Taskforces 2020

### Knowledge Economy

Chair: Virginia Briggs, MinterEllison

Deputy Chair: Ken Woo, PwC

### Liveability / Lovability

Chair: Lyn Lewis-Smith, BESydney

Deputy Chair: Prof. Ross Harley

### Planning

Chair: Bruce Taper, Kinesis

Deputy Chair: Alison Holloway, SGS Economics and Planning

### Smart Cities

Chair: Dorte Ekelund, SMEC

### Transport

Chair: Larry McGrath, John Holland Group

Deputy Chair: Jodie Brough, Newgate Communications

### Western Sydney

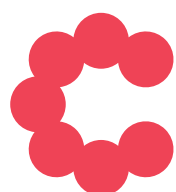
Chair: Andy Marks, Western Sydney University





If you are interested in learning more about the Committee, or joining as a member, please reach out to Hannah Jamieson, Director of Engagement and Development, at [hannah@sydney.org.au](mailto:hannah@sydney.org.au)

We'd love to talk.






Committee  
for  
Sydney

## Keep in touch

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