



# Year in Review 2023



Committee  
for  
Sydney

**Thank you to our  
members and  
partners. You helped  
us make a huge  
impact in 2022–23.**

Cover image: Khruangbin perform to a capacity crowd at Sydney Opera House. Source: Sydney Opera House / Jordan Munns.

# Chair's message

**The Committee for Sydney is, at its heart, an organisation that believes Sydney is the best place in the world. We know how great the opportunity sitting right in front of us is, and we see every day that our citizens, institutions and businesses are ready to seize this opportunity.**

There is a positive energy in Sydney right now.

A new NSW Government is settling in and we're pleased to see them focused on issues we believe are critical to our city's success – housing, climate and culture, while continuing to deliver the infrastructure and reform needed to respond to a growing city.

And indeed a lot has been achieved over the past year.

Sydney has established itself as the home of major global events – with World Pride, the FIFA Women's World Cup and SXSW Sydney all putting our city's brand in front of global audiences.

This has been supported by a quieter, but no less revolutionary change to our rich nighttime economy and cultural sector. Sydney Modern opened, delivering world-class cultural experiences, while 1.4 million people experienced the Ramadan night markets in Lakemba.



And while housing remains a critical barrier to our city's success, we have seen governments of all levels collaborating with the private sector to begin to address this in a bold and substantial way.

The Committee for Sydney has been at the forefront of all these – often starting conversations five years ago that have shaped the public conversations we're having today – whether it's the importance of density done well, the 24-hour economy, Sydney's global brand or delivering affordable housing.

The past year has been a big change for Sydney – and I am excited about how the conversations the Committee has kicked off this year will shape debates in the years to come.

Michael Rose AM



# CEO's introduction

**The Committee for Sydney has established itself as a long term champion for Sydney.**

Our organisation doesn't shy away from grappling with the big challenges facing our city and advocating for solutions that will take many years to deliver – and indeed there are serious, long-term challenges facing Sydney.

Sydney's housing crisis – decades in the making – has taken on a heightened focus this year. The Committee has been at the front of this debate, releasing research on affordable housing, planning reform and economic analysis that found unaffordable housing costs Sydney more than \$10bn a year in lost productivity, talent and innovation.

Decarbonising and responding to climate change is both critically important and urgent. Our research this year has focused on how we decarbonise our economy, encourage nature positive urban design and manage the increased natural disaster risk associated with climate change – most pertinently the increased risk and cost of flooding.

We have also shifted our focus to respond to an emerging issue that requires focus from institutions and communities across Sydney – the fairness of Sydney. I am worried that Sydney is becoming increasingly divided between those that can access the things that make for a good life and those who can't. Our new equity



and fairness agenda will initially focus on four key areas of this divide: the spatial inequality inherent in our city's design; the gender inequality in our society; ensuring Sydney remains a open and welcoming place for migrants and visitors; and meaningful action on reconciliation with First Nations communities.

Solving these issues isn't something that will happen quickly. But I know that Sydney is up to the challenge – and the Committee for Sydney's track record, and our essential work this past year – of leading these critical conversations.

I am proud to be Chief Executive Officer of the Committee – and I want to recognise the fantastic work led by my predecessor, Gabriel Metcalf, and the brilliant team of the Committee for Sydney.

Eamon Waterford



# Impact



running line print, alongside Metro West construction underway. source: Sydney Metro.



After the disruption of recent years, Sydney stepped up with a series of global scale events, continued major infrastructure delivery, and a serious effort to properly grapple with important reforms across a range of domains.

In a period of change triggered by the election of the new state government, the Committee's research and advocacy work has been deep, effective and responsive to the changing conditions, and we are seeing the long-term benefits of that work across our policy portfolio.

## Housing crisis

This profound challenge is biting across the community and throughout all sectors of the economy. The Committee has been leading efforts to unlock bold, long-term solutions.

Our reports reset the debate, making the case for major structural reform to resolve this chronic issue, as well as recommendations to speed the delivery of affordable housing, focusing development around rail stations, and ensuring the increased density is done well.

## Major moves

- Adoption by the NSW Government of the Committee's focus on transit-oriented development, with a new strategic planning instrument expected to increase density around train stations
- Ambitious target to build 75,000 homes a year
- Reforms to increase social and affordable housing, including a 30% bonus for developments over 75m with at least 15% affordable housing.

## Culture at centre stage

This year, Sydney's seen a major reset on culture and the nightlife. The Committee has backed government policy development, and worked alongside our members to ensure the opportunity for reform is taken up with gusto.

Our papers on creating more opportunities for culture in people's everyday lives across Sydney have bolstered support for a suite of simple and effective measures, including a revival of town halls, plug and play infrastructure in public places, parklets and open streets.

## Major moves

- Successful trial of first Special Entertainment Precinct on Enmore Road, rollout of Uptown Accelerator program, and Enmore, Lakemba and Parramatta all receive Purple Flag accreditation
- Major investments in Parramatta Powerhouse, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney Opera House, and White Bay Power Station to host Biennale of Sydney.
- Review of NSW cultural policy, aligning visitor and culture economies and rebalancing cultural funding to west and southwest

- NSW's first Minister for the Night Time Economy and Music
- Sound NSW established, with \$109 million windfall for contemporary music sector
- Announcement of vibrancy reforms aligned with the Committee's advocacy on the 24-hour economy.

## Big events

Large scale events are more important than ever in attracting visitors back to our shores, and NSW has attracted the world's biggest this year, and delivered under the spotlight.

The Committee's strongly backed these efforts, from delivery through to mobilising member support ahead of key milestones – and, of course, celebrating alongside the rest of the city.

## Major moves

- Sydney celebrated the Women's World Cup like never before, with games bringing the city to a standstill (and transforming our Sydney Awards gala for good measure!)
- World Pride Sydney was an extraordinary celebration, with a huge community response including 50,000 walking across the bridge
- SXSW Sydney is bringing the world's key players in music, tech and creative to town, with major showcases for domestic talent
- Huge attendance figures for Vivid Sydney, Sydney Festival, Sydney Fringe, Ramadan night markets and other festivals
- Sydney Marathon is in the second year of its pitch for World Major status, and with it the large attendance attracted by the elite races.



Premier Chris Minns in conversation with Eamon Watersford at the Chronically Unaffordable Housing report launch. Photograph by Scott Ehler

## Mobility and infrastructure

Despite the rhetoric, we have urged government to maintain its infrastructure pipeline, a key ingredient in ensuring Sydney remains one of the world's most liveable global cities.

While the state government has wound back its commitment to fast rail and the sandstone megaregion, we're advocating to the federal government to ensure this infrastructure is delivered to boost the nation's global competitiveness.

### Major moves

- Almost \$25 billion committed to Metro West, Metro South-West and Western Sydney Airport line, plus stage two of Parramatta light rail

- Making train stations more accessible and safe, with a major upgrade of Central Station's underground concourse and long-awaited accessibility improvements at Redfern
- Western Sydney Rapid Bus Network to connect Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown to the new airport
- Reducing the number of trucks using surface roads by cutting the cost of tolls on M5 East and M8 underground motorways by 33%
- Bike network improvements relisted on Infrastructure Australia's priority list, with significant new investment including the Greenway, Norwest Boulevard and Winston Hills
- Great new swimming spots on Parramatta River at Bayview Park Concord, Marinawi Cove in Barangaroo, and the new Parramatta Aquatic Centre

## First Nations

Our goal is to help Sydney be the best it can be, for all. That can't happen without genuine reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Beyond that first step is a tremendous opportunity.

As an urban policy think tank, we recognise we are still learning about Country and what that means for our work, but we know there's so much for all of us to gain from a deeper understanding and awareness of First Nations culture.

### Major moves

- MOU signed to begin transferring Me-Mel (previously Goat Island) back to Aboriginal ownership
- Indigenous centre of excellence to be established on Dharug land as part of Western Sydney University's Parramatta South campus
- First Nations led teams designing major parks in the Bradfield aerotropolis and Barangaroo
- Connecting with Country framework released by Government Architect NSW.

## Energy transition and climate resilience

As Sydney emerges from a period of heavy rains and flooding into another hot summer, the Committee's advocacy continues to help set the course on key debates around energy transition, valuing nature and building resilience to climate and natural hazard risk.

We have worked with government to increase Sydney's capacity to adapt to a changing climate, and on meeting the state's net zero commitments. We have offered pragmatic solutions to manage flood and other hazards, increase decentralised energy, and ensure households and businesses continue to enjoy reliable and affordable energy.

### Major wins

- NSW to establish a Net Zero Commission
- \$1b for the Energy Security Corporation, which will invest in critical areas like community batteries
- Australia's first national EV strategy underway, with new national emissions standards for trucks and buses, and NSW investing \$263.5m in EV charging infrastructure
- World's first 100% renewable energy shore power precinct, with two berths ready for ships to plug in at Glebe Island and White Bay by end 2024, and three more bulk berths by 2030
- Business cases for NSW infrastructure projects will need to measure embodied carbon from 2024
- Smart meters will be mandatory across Sydney by 2030, enabling visibility and more effective use of rooftop solar and battery storage
- The Committee's Nature Positive Sydney report receives the AILA NSW's Research, Policy and Communications Award for Excellence
- Establishment of the NSW Reconstruction Authority with powers to reduce natural hazard and climate risk.



# Research

Report

Sydney Leadership

Report

High achievers: A plan for unleashing the huge potential of Sydney's universities

Sep 22

Report



Nov 22

Dec 22

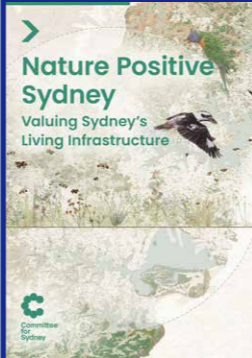
Report

State of the City

Report

Life in Sydney

Report



Feb 23

Submission

Commonwealth Government Climate Change Authority submission

Mar 23

Apr 23

Report

Future Cities Campbelltown

Policy paper

Federal budget – we must continue to think big and show ambition

May 23

Report

WESTERN SYDNEY  
PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS



Jun 23

Jul 23

Aug 23

Submission

A new look at culture – NSW Culture Review Submission

Policy paper

NSW State Budget Review

Report



Treasurer Daniel Mookhey keynote at Sydney Awards. Photograph: Scott Ehler

Report

Sydney Leadership

Sep 23

Oct 23

Report



Submission

Six steps to decarbonise the six cities region

Report

Future Cities Liverpool

Report



Policy paper

Priorities for the next NSW Government

Policy paper

Priorities for the incoming Labor Government

Policy paper

Lowering Warragamba Dam is only the first step towards Sydney's climate resilience

Policy paper

After plug and play infrastructure



Everyday Culture – Plug & Play City

Policy paper



Everyday Culture – Parklets

Submission

NSW Toll Review Submission

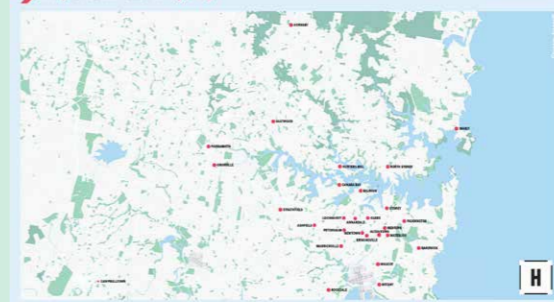
Policy paper



Everyday Culture – Open Streets

Policy paper

Map of town halls in Sydney



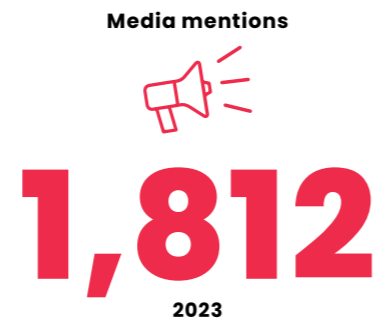
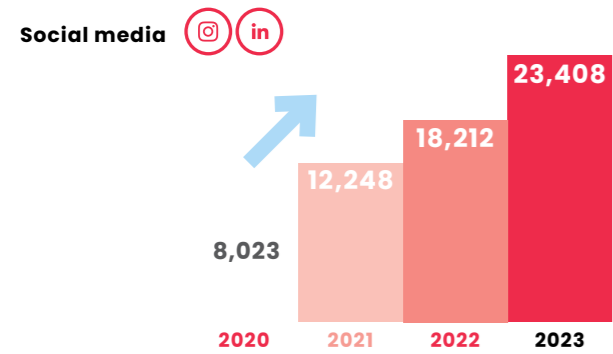
Everyday Culture – Town Hall Revival

Report



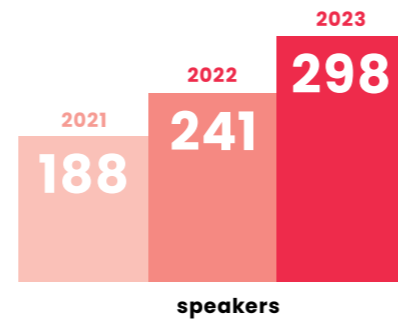
Defending Sydney

# Communication and convening



**78**  
events  
with **74** free to members

**9,264**  
Total event audience  
(incl in person, online, video audiences)



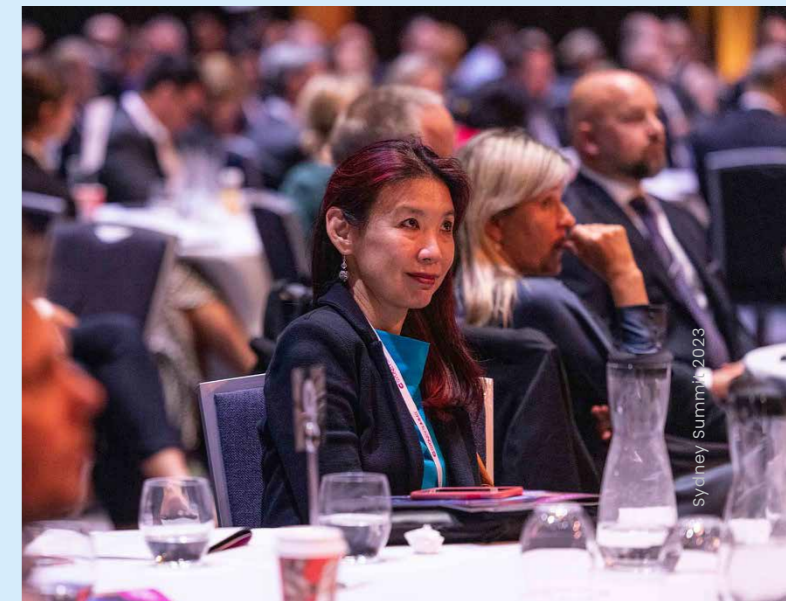
The Committee's events in 2023 featured political, business, community and government leaders, globally renowned urbanists, influential researchers and others, and attracted strong member participation.

The program included two major annual events and two regular series:

- Sydney Awards, a major awards program celebrating the people who make Sydney the best it can be, with a keynote from Treasurer Daniel Mookhey
- Sydney Summit, a half-day leadership conference, including keynotes from then

Premier Dominic Perrottet and soon-to-be Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Paul Scully

- Future Cities, a spotlight on Sydney's emerging and fast-growing centres, starting with Liverpool and Campelltown
- Member briefings, walking tours and online events taking a deep dive into key challenges for Sydney
- Complementing these programs, the Committee hosts targeted boardroom events, workshops and roundtables that underpin research and advocacy work.



The Committee's communication program aims to build understanding and support for the ideas that will move Sydney forward, with strong growth on media and social channels, and great feedback from members on our email products:

- The Sydneysider – a fortnightly email newsletter on key insights for Sydney urbanists
- Sydney Media Today – a daily email for members, summarising and linking through to the key news of the day.





# 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 eleven partners and thank them for their leadership in this space.



## Global Pathways Partner



## Resilience Program Partners



## Sydney Awards Major Partner



## Sydney Summit sponsors



## Sydney Award Event Sponsors



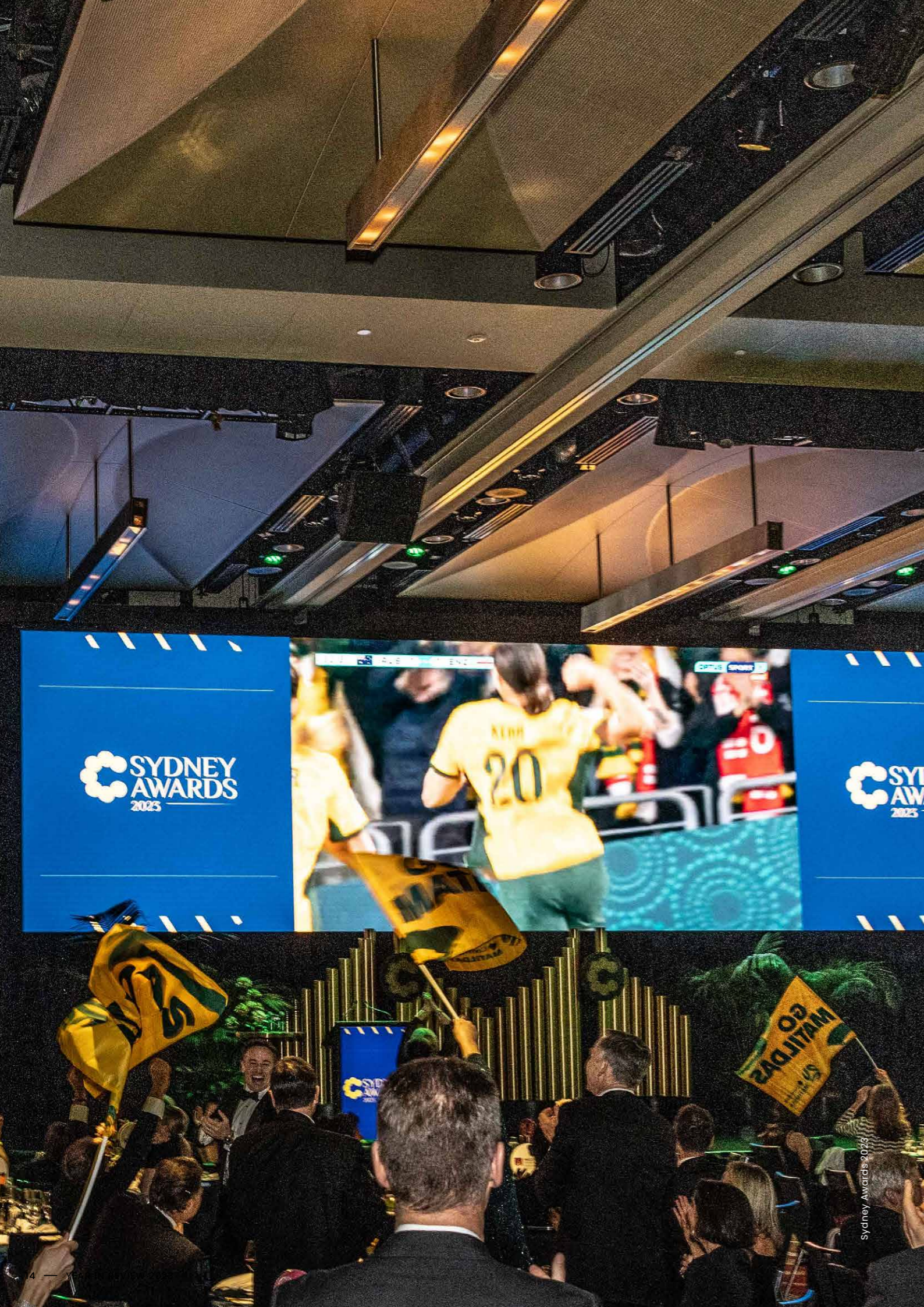
## Sydney Summit Media Partner



## Sydney +10 sponsors



## Office host



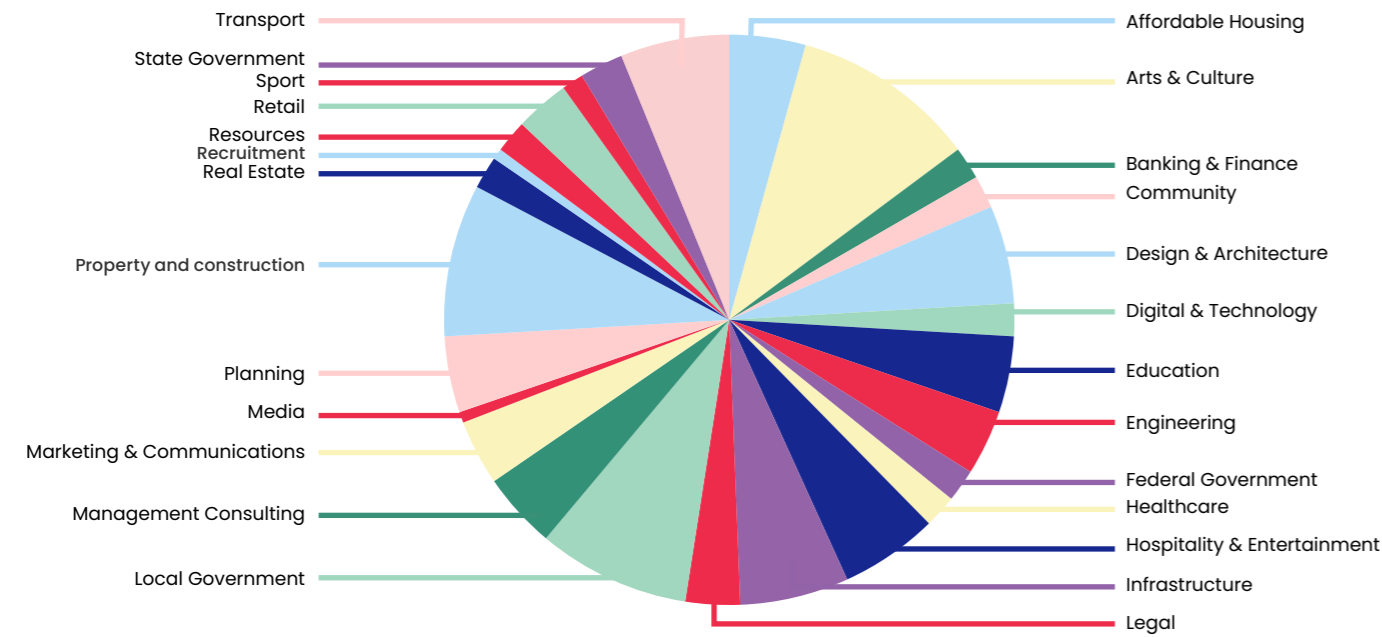
Sydney Awards 2025





# Members

## Members by industry



## Members are essential to the Committee's output and impact.

We are funded by a group of Sydney's leading organisations spanning industry, government, education, and cultural institutions. Our differences are our strength, our passion for Sydney is our driving force.

We are proud to represent our 160 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 more than 404,802 jobs in NSW and 917,064 jobs in Australia.

Overwhelmingly, their number one reason for supporting the Committee is to help shape the future of Sydney.

## 2023 performance feedback

- Quality of research: **86% rated this as strong or very strong**
- Quality of events and briefing program: **91% rated this as strong or very strong**
- Usefulness as a source of information for you: **78% rated this as strong or very strong**
- Ability to influence debate and media discussion: **86% rated this as strong or very strong**
- Ability to influence government: **74% rated this as strong or very strong**

# Members



- Accor
- AECOM
- AFL NSW / ACT
- Airbnb
- Allens
- ALTRAC Light Rail
- Amazon
- Aqualand
- Arcadia Landscape Architecture
- Arcadis
- Architectus
- Art Gallery of NSW
- Art Pharmacy
- Arup
- Astrolabe Group
- Aurecon Group
- Ausgrid
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian Museum
- Australian National Maritime Museum
- Australian Traffic Network
- Australian Turf Club
- Australian Unity
- Bangarra Dance Theatre
- BaptistCare
- Bastion Reputation
- Bates Smart
- Bayside Council
- BDO
- BESydney
- Billbergia
- Blacktown City Council
- Block
- Boyden
- Bridge Housing
- Brookfield
- Buildcorp Group
- BVN
- Campbelltown City Council
- Carla Zampatti
- CBRE
- Celestino
- City of Canterbury Bankstown Council
- City of Parramatta
- City of Ryde
- City of Sydney
- City West Housing
- Coles



Connect Macquarie Park Innovation District  
Corrs Chambers Westgarth  
Cox Architecture  
Crown Resorts  
CSIRO  
Deloitte  
Destination NSW  
Dexus  
EG  
Endeavour Energy  
Entertainment Quarter  
Ethos Urban  
Evolve Housing  
EY  
Frost\* Collective  
Georges River Council  
GHD  
Gilbert and Tobin  
GML Heritage  
GoGet  
GPT Group  
Grimshaw Architects  
Hassell  
Hatch RobertsDay  
HDR  
HKA  
Hoyne  
Hume Community Housing Association  
ICC Sydney  
Inner West Council

Investa Office Management  
Ipsos  
ISPT  
Jacobs  
JLL  
John Holland Group  
Keolis Downer  
Kinesis  
KPMG  
La Perouse Aboriginal Alliance  
Landcom  
Lendlease Development  
Link Wentworth Housing  
Liverpool City Council  
Macquarie Group  
Macquarie University  
Maddocks  
McConnell Dowell  
McKinsey & Company  
Mecone  
Mirvac  
Monogram Partners  
Mott MacDonald  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Museums of History NSW  
nbn co  
News Corp Australia  
Night Time Industries Association  
NRT Group  
NXT Building Group

Origin Energy  
Penrith City Council  
Plenary  
Port Authority of NSW  
Powerhouse  
PwC  
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust  
Salter Brothers  
SEC Newgate Australia  
SGS Economics and Planning  
SMEC  
South Western Sydney Local Health District  
Southern Sydney Regional Organisations of Councils  
St George Community Housing  
Stantec  
Stockland  
Sydney Airport  
Sydney Community Foundation  
Sydney Dance Company  
Sydney Festival  
Sydney Fringe  
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust  
Sydney Local Health District  
Sydney Opera House  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra  
Sydney Theatre Company  
Sydney Water  
Sydney Writers' Festival  
Taronga Zoo

Thales  
The University of Sydney  
Toga Group  
Tract  
Transdev Australasia  
Transport Asset Holding Entity  
Transport for NSW  
Transurban  
Tribal Warrior  
Tyro  
Uber  
University of Technology Sydney  
University of Wollongong  
UNSW  
Urbis  
Ventia  
Warren and Mahoney  
Waverley Council  
Western Sydney Airport  
Western Sydney University  
Westpac  
Willoughby City Council  
Woolworths  
WSP

# Executive Committee

**Michael Rose AM**, Chair

**Sue Horlin**, Deputy Chair – Managing Partner Assurance, PwC

**Professor Attila Brungs** – Vice-Chancellor & President, UNSW

**Lisa Chung AM** – Non-Executive Director, Australian Unity, AV Jennings

**Christine Covington** – Partner, Corrs Chambers Westgarth

**Doug Ferguson** – Chair NSW and Head of Asia and International Markets, KPMG

**Kevin George** – Consultant

**Leonie King** – CEO, City West Housing

**John Lehmann** – MD The Australian, NSW, ACT, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph & Prestige Titles, News Corp Australia

**Lyn Lewis-Smith** – CEO, Business Events Sydney

**Tom Mackellar** – MD Development, Lendlease

**Larry McGrath** – GM NSW & ACT, McConnell Dowell

**James Rosenwax** – Regional MD NSW and ACT, AECOM

**David Thodey AC** – Chair, Tyro and Xero

**Gabrielle Trainor AO** – Director, Western Parkland City Authority

**Brian Tyson** – Managing Partner, SEC Newgate Australia

**Seckin Ungur** – Partner, McKinsey & Co



If you are interested in learning more about the Committee, or joining as a member, please reach out to Hannah Jamieson, Chief Operating Officer, 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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