

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

NORTHERN SYDNEY REGIONAL
ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

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NSROC

Northern
Sydney
Regional
Organisation
of Councils



Acknowledgement of Country

Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) recognises the Traditional Custodians of the land.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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President's Report

I am pleased to present our annual report for the year ending 30 June 2023.

As in the past, NSROC is keenly focused on activities to support the ongoing financial sustainability of our member councils who are tasked with maintaining and enhancing our region's productivity and liveability.

This year saw all our member councils operating in a challenging environment marked by inflationary pressures on service delivery, difficulty in recruiting staff and a changing regulatory environment.

NSROC has undertaken extensive advocacy work by meeting with Ministers, participating in LGNSW initiatives and developing effective working relationships with senior executives in NSW Government agencies. Earlier this year we acknowledged the in-coming Minns Government and approached the Premier and his Ministers as well as our local members to apprise them on our collective priorities for the region.

Working with IPART and the NSW Government on rating reform is a continuing activity. We have made formal submissions and participated in workshops held by IPART and continue to maintain a vigilant eye on developments in this area. We are working collaboratively as a valued stakeholder to realise outcomes for our communities.

NSROC has responded to regulatory changes and has taken a leading role in working across our member councils as well as with other Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC) in the Sydney basin. For example, in response to the amendments to the SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) relating to electric vehicle charging infrastructure, NSROC has worked with member councils and with the other ROCs to develop a consistent position and ensure our concerns are considered by government. NSROC has also supported member councils on complex whole-of-region procurement initiatives, including procurement services for roads maintenance and for acquiring an advanced monitoring system for greenhouse gas emissions from council operations.

Waste management is a challenging area of operation where our councils are trying to achieve environmentally sound outcomes through novel approaches. Our Community Recycling Centre is handling increasing amounts of problem waste and we completed a complex food organics trial within four council areas to assess feasibility of food organics collection and disposal in a range of demographic settings. We attended the Mayoral Summit on Waste in May 2023 focusing on emerging issues of infrastructure capacity in the Sydney metropolitan area. We also attended the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group to advocate for effective policy positions on waste management in Sydney. At the same time, we are proactively researching options for diverting a greater proportion of plastic waste from landfill.

In the coming year our priorities will continue to be ensuring council financial sustainability and improving waste infrastructure. We will also seek to work in partnership with Government to deliver on liveability for our region through investment in social and cultural, transport, especially active transport, and sporting infrastructure and green public spaces.

I acknowledge the contribution of my Vice Presidents, Cr Andrew Zbik and Cr Nathan Tilbury and my fellow councillor colleagues on the Board. On behalf of the Board, I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the General Managers Advisory Committee to the effectiveness of NSROC and especially thank Chair Steven Head. I also thank Meg Montgomery, NSROC Executive Director for an outstanding year of leadership in which she has most ably supported the entire organisation. NSROC continues to prioritise strategically achievable activities and collectively pool council resources to deliver regional outcomes.

I commend this report to you and look forward to continuing our collaborative work through NSROC.

Councillor Carolyn Corrigan

NSROC PRESIDENT

Mayor of Mosman Council



**COUNCILLOR
CAROLYN CORRIGAN**

NSROC PRESIDENT
MAYOR OF MOSMAN COUNCIL



About Us

The **Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)** members are the eight councils in the northern Sydney area: Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, and Willoughby.

NSROC brings these councils together to work on projects and common goals. To create solutions that benefit not just individual communities, but the entire region. Furthermore, NSROC actively seeks opportunities to work together with State and Australian government departments and community organisations.

By working collaboratively NSROC seeks to deliver outcomes for the social, environmental and economic benefit of our local communities and encourage growth and cooperation across the metropolitan area.

Role of NSROC

- Advocate regional positions and priorities.
- Collaborate for the benefit of the Northern Sydney region.
- Provide strong local government leadership.

Directions and Objectives

NSROC works with its member councils to enhance the liveability, productivity, and sustainability of the region through:

- Strengthening resilience through advocacy and leadership.
- Improving waste and resource management.
- Improving place making through urban planning and infrastructure.
- Strengthening organisational operations and sustainability of NSROC members.

Key Principles

NSROC helps its member councils achieve their specific community goals by following these main principles:

- Supporting council operations that are sustainable and improve community resilience.
- Collaborating effectively with other councils in the Sydney region, State and Commonwealth Governments, industry, and local communities or community organisations.
- Working together to create a better region by sharing best practice case studies, research, and information.

NSROC Board

The NSROC Board guides and oversees the organisation's activities. Each member council is represented on the Board by their Mayor and one Councillor. In addition to the Annual General Meeting, the NSROC Board convenes at least four times a year to discuss important strategic matters and give guidance to NSROC's activities.

Board Executive Positions

Every year, the Board chooses a President and two Vice-Presidents who make up the organisation's Executive.

The NSROC Executive members during the 2022-2023 year were:

- **President:** Councillor / Mayor Carolyn Corrigan, Mosman Municipal Council.
- **Vice President:** Councillor / Mayor Andrew Zbik, Lane Cove Council.
- **Vice President:** Councillor Nathan Tilbury, Hornsby Shire Council.



Pictured: Map of Local Government Areas that are part of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.

General Managers Advisory Committee

The General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) consists of the General Managers of the eight NSROC Councils. GMAC supports the NSROC board by guiding the day to day operations of NSROC.

In 2022-23, Mr Steven Head, General Manager of Hornsby Shire Council, was the Chair of GMAC. Mr Dominic Johnson, General Manager of Mosman Council served as NSROC Treasurer.

Professional Officers Groups and Other Committees

NSROC convenes Professional Officers Groups (POGs), that include representatives from each of its member Councils. In the year 2022-23, the following POGs worked with NSROC:

- Arts and Cultural Services.
- Communications and Media.
- Community Services.
- Environmental Sustainability.
- Financial Services.
- Sports and Recreation.
- Local Emergency Management Operations.

In addition, NSROC convenes the Waste Advisory Group (WAG) and the Northern Sydney Transport Leadership Group. During the year, the WAG provided advice on the NSROC Regional Waste Strategy and feedback for engagement on NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) Waste Delivery Plan.

The Northern Planners Group provided significant advice and support on infrastructure contribution reform impacts and various planning reforms.

The Northern Sydney Transport Leadership Group facilitated engagement between councils, Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) on transport infrastructure and related matters.

Key Activities

Strengthen Resilience Through Advocacy and Leadership

NSROC facilitates member council collaboration on key issues and activities to generate benefits – social, environmental, and economic – for local communities and for the region as a whole. During the year, NSROC advocacy efforts focused on ensuring council financial sustainability, addressing the Sydney metro region’s current waste infrastructure crisis and responding to proposed reforms to the rating and planning systems.

Rate Peg Methodology

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is responsible for establishing the rate peg for Local Government, determining the maximum allowable percentage increase in a council's general income for the year. In 2022-23 IPART initiated a review of the methodology used to determine this rate peg. Local government and other stakeholders had the opportunity to share their concerns and suggestions during this process.

NSROC collaborated closely with its member councils to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the existing methodology. Additionally, NSROC participated in public hearings with IPART to gain further insights into the current methodology and its review process.

NSROC lodged a series of submissions to IPART in 2022-23, responding to the Terms of Reference (August 2022), Issues Paper (November 2022) and draft report (June 2023). NSROC’s position remains that inputs to the rate peg should reflect the true cost to council of delivering services. The final IPART Rate Peg Methodology Review report has been issued to the NSW Government but has not yet been publicly released.

Domestic Waste Management

NSROC contributed to the IPART Review of Domestic Waste Management Service Charges. In May 2022, NSROC had lodged a submission responding to IPART’s Draft Report. NSROC did not support IPART’s proposed introduction of a statewide waste peg benchmark and asked that IPART reengage with councils to workshop solutions that address the main issues that are responsible for increasing domestic waste charges and not just those under IPART’s jurisdiction.

NSROC continued to engage with IPART throughout 2022-23 through informal discussions at officer level as well as at the General Manager level.

IPART responded positively to our suggestions and IPART’s Final Report reflects a practical way forward that does not introduce a ‘waste peg’ and will be driven by the NSW Office of Local Government.

Independent Private Certifiers

NSROC collaborated closely with member councils and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment on regulating Private Building Certifiers. In response to a 2018 independent review of the NSW planning system, there has been a consumer-driven push to enhance the transparency, reliability, and oversight of Private Certifiers in construction.

NSROC actively engaged with key ministers to advocate for this important issue – meeting with:

- The Minister for Fair Trading, Customer Service, Digital Government, and Small Business, The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP.
- The Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman, MP.
- The Minister for Planning and Homes, The Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP.

Our proposed solution utilises existing database information to reduce conflict of interest and increase transparency. NSROC continues to advocate on this critical issue, ensuring that NSW's expected population growth is met with a secure and dependable supply of homes and buildings.

Key Meetings

The NSROC President, Executive Director, Board, and GMAC have proactively engaged with our stakeholders to present evidence based positions on the potential effects of key issues for councils.

During the reporting year, NSROC was able to meet with key government Ministers and MPs –

- **The Hon. Anthony Roberts** – Minister for Planning and Minister for Homes.
- **The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman** – Minister for Local Government.
- **The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP** – Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business.
- **The Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC** – Shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Cities.
- **Felicity Wilson, MP** – Member for North Shore.

NSROC representatives also met with other key stakeholders and agency representatives including:

- AusGrid
- Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
- Office of Local Government
- Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Government Architect
- Transport for NSW
- Create NSW
- NSW Office of Sport
- Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
- Western Sydney Parklands (The Parks)
- City of Sydney
- Northern Beaches Council
- Northern Sydney Mental Health Regional Leadership Group.
- Museums of History NSW



Pictured: NSROC Networking Breakfast, Oct 2022

Improve Waste and Resource Management

Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 Stage 1 Plan 2021-2027

The State government's release of the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 Stage 1 Plan 2021-2027 (WASM) in June 2021 established a circular economy and emissions controls as key pillars for waste and resource management. The WASM dictated an organic mandate requiring that all councils in NSW offer separate household collections for food and garden organics by 2030.

However, there have been challenges identified with the mandate such as:

- No member councils currently offer a service to collect Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO);
- Most FOGO services in NSW are offered to single dwellings but only half the dwellings in this region are single dwellings; and
- in residential flat buildings, the volume of garden waste collected is very small.

NSROC used NSW EPA funding to pilot a food scraps collection service from representative types of dwellings. The results of the Food Organics Research project were circulated to all our councils and staff from Willoughby Council also presented them at the Waste Conference in May 2023. Other projects this year investigated green waste infrastructure and the circular economy which will inform our councils' future management of organic wastes.

NSROC had engaged with its member councils to develop the Regional Waste Strategy (RWS) to reflect regional priorities in response to WASM. The RWS identifies the vision and priorities that are important for the region such as avoiding and reducing waste, recovering resources, and maintaining environmental protections.

The RWS also highlights the importance of working cooperatively across the waste management domain. The Board adopted the RWS in November 2022 and projects undertaken this year focused on evidence gathering to support better waste management, including organics management and the need for appropriate infrastructure.

The Pathways to Shared Services Project identified three areas of potential joint procurement: food organics services, transfer capacity for organics and possibly residual waste and waste processing contracts.

These projects helped set the scene for the current Regional Organics Implications Study expected to finish in October 2023. This study is assessing the viability and implications of providing a FOGO waste service compared to business as usual for the region. The model examines the regional costs and benefits (including a life cycle carbon assessment) of introducing the new service. The capacity to apply local data in the model will make it a valuable tool for each council to assess these impacts at their Local Government Area (LGA) level.

The evidence base provided by NSROC studies/research means that our councils have the best available information to guide their future waste management actions.

Infrastructure

Waste processing and transfer facilities in metropolitan Sydney are controlled by a small number of large corporations which severely limits councils' ability to obtain competitive prices for waste management services. Part of the reason for this situation is that it is difficult and time consuming to get planning and regulatory approvals for waste facilities and arguably even more challenging to get a social licence to operate. The NSROC region requires two key facilities, a waste transfer station able to accept organic (and other) wastes and another Community Recycling Centre.

This year, NSROC has built on previous work with projects contributing to the search for a long-term lease or purchase of land for a Community Recycling Centre (CRC). After initially planning a broader feasibility study, NSROC this year changed the focus to helping fund a site-specific investigation by the City of Ryde for potential uses of a large tract of council owned land.

The organics mandate, expected to be operational by 2030, will require a significant increase in facilities for processing councils' organic material whether it be Food Organics (FO) or FOGO.

While opportunities exist for composting such wastes, other options are being explored. NSROC and six member councils have joined four Western Sydney councils in a feasibility study led by Sydney Water into processing kerbside organics with biosolids generated by sewage treatment plants.

Meanwhile restrictions on exports have highlighted the need for more local processing and recycling capacity for other wastes too. As limited domestic opportunities exist for processing mixed plastic and soft plastics waste. During the year, NSROC commenced the Plastics Industry Research project which was completed in August 2023. It identified planned and existing industry processing capabilities for different types of plastics, as well as potential opportunities for councils to divert more plastic waste from landfill. This market information helps ensure that councils have the best available information when tendering for waste processing contracts.

SSROC Mayoral Waste Summit

All metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs) supported the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC)-led Mayoral Waste Summit held in May 2023 focusing on infrastructure, joint procurement and residual waste. Most Sydney councils also endorsed the subsequent Mayoral Minute which has become the basis for advocacy at both state and federal level.

The Summit was an important demonstration of the value achieved by ongoing cooperation between councils across Sydney. The Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (MWRR) has continued to regularly meet this last year. MWRR consists of the Chair of GMAC (or equivalent) and the Executive Director (or equivalent) of SSROC, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC), NSROC and a staff representative of the councils in the Macarthur region.



Pictured: Community Recycling Centre, Artarmon

Community Recycling Centre

The CRC was established in 2017 and continues to be a vital service for North Shore residents by helping them dispose of problem wastes and e-waste safely.

This site has seen a 20% increase in the quantity of target materials received over 2022-23 when compared to the previous period.

There has also been a substantial increase in the E-Waste and X-Ray's received by the centre with a total of 353 tonnes collected over the financial year period, representing an increase of 26% when compared to the previous financial year.

The success of the CRC in Artarmon is demonstrated by the expanse of its user catchment which stretches from Sydney's eastern suburbs to the Northern Beaches.

Improve Place Making Through Urban Planning and Infrastructure

Throughout 2022-23 NSROC has sought to maximise benefits for communities by responding to government reforms that impact the local government sector including financial, planning, housing and waste.

Infrastructure Contributions

NSROC continued to engage with senior government representatives and IPART in relation to the proposed reforms to Infrastructure Contributions under s7.11 and 7.12 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

NSROC developed localised modelling of the proposed reform that clearly demonstrated that our councils would be significantly worse off. NSROC shared our findings with SSROC and WSROC and embarked on a concerted campaign to ensure the reforms did not proceed as then proposed. This campaign was highly successful and the reforms have not proceeded.

Supply and Demand for Sports Facilities

The NSROC region is experiencing increasing demand for indoor/outdoor sports facilities and multi-use spaces due to population growth and changing participation trends. Councils face the challenging task of finding solutions to meet these growing needs in a region with minimal undeveloped open space.

To better understand the region's requirements, NSROC enlisted Otium Planning to conduct a supply and demand analysis of sportsgrounds, outdoor playing courts, and indoor sports facilities. Otium collaborated with individual councils and state sporting organisations to gather data for the analysis.

The report includes:

- Population studies, including growth and density projections.
- Sport and physical activity participation rates amongst adults and children.
- New emerging sports and activities.
- Sports infrastructure (indoor and outdoor).

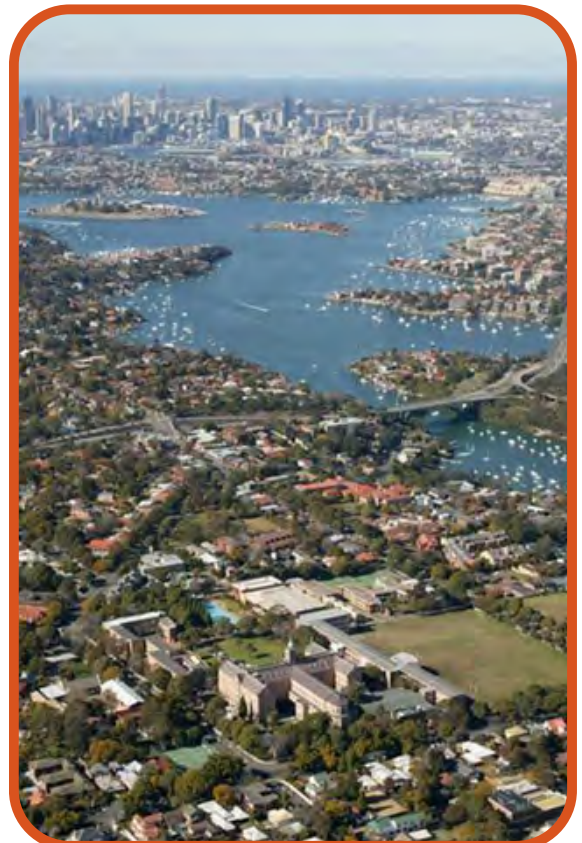
The report discusses the impact of social and environmental factors (COVID-19, climate change etc) on participation and considers the use of different materials in construction (i.e. natural turf vs. synthetic turf on sports fields). It also provides examples of strategies used by high density cities overseas and across Australia.

The report provides NSROC member councils with a valuable evidence base and insights enabling them to make informed policy and infrastructure development decisions.

Housing and Productivity Contribution

NSROC undertook a significant advocacy campaign to ensure the incoming NSW Government was aware of the implications of its proposed Housing and Productivity Contribution reform (formerly known as Regional Infrastructure Contribution). NSROC met with senior government representatives and wrote to relevant Minister's and members of the Opposition.

As a result of our campaign, the Chair of GMAC was invited to give evidence to the Upper House Inquiry on 8 June. NSROC continues to advocate for the concept of nexus whereby funds collected in a region should be used to supplement services and infrastructure in that region. NSROC Councils remain firmly of the view that dwellings and community infrastructure must be built in tandem to ensure amenities are available for residents as they arrive.



Pictured: Aerial photo, Hunters Hill

Northern Sydney Transport Infrastructure Strategy

Throughout 2022-23, NSROC worked with member councils, Transport NSW and the Greater Cities Commission to achieve the goals set out in its 2020 Northern Sydney Transport Strategy.

The purpose of the strategy is to improve focus on the Northern Sydney transport network addressing gaps in the system, public transport (e.g. bus services) and enabling investment in EV charging infrastructure through region-wide consistent strategies, policies and controls in compliance with the EV infrastructure plan set out by the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). The implementation of the Strategy fosters close engagement between NSROC, Transport for NSW and the Greater Cities Commission.

Social and Community Infrastructure Strategy

NSROC has collaborated with its member councils to create a strategy for Northern Sydney to ensure residents have access to reliable social infrastructure.

Items achieved under this strategy in 2022-23 include:

- Developed a KPI monitoring framework which provides councils insights on actions required to enhance utilisation of existing facilities and resources. This included encouraging councils to invest in IT applications to enable the public to make and manage bookings online.
- Investigated new business models for service delivery which reflect the latest demand and usage patterns and presented findings to NSROC working groups.
- Investigated funding approaches for operational expenditure that reflected social infrastructure's value contribution to liveability through commission of literature review in December 2022.
- Engaged with government Ministers and agencies, including GCC and Create NSW to further the region's strategic priorities. This included seeking the establishment of new grant programs to support local governments to invest in refurbishing and developing new social and cultural facilities.



Pictured: Playground, Hornsby

Housing Affordability

In October 2022, NSROC attended the Resilient Sydney Mayoral Summit on Affordable and Diverse Housing. This summit's purpose was to create a forum for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Senior Officers to discuss the affordable housing challenges as many communities across Sydney were struggling in accessing affordable rental housing. As an outcome of the Mayoral Summit several NSROC councils passed a Mayoral Minute seeking to support the delivery of affordable housing.

NSROC and its member council officers also participated in the subsequent Housing Affordability Forum which focused on tools designed to assist councils in establishing an Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme. The forum helped to outline the main barriers and identify key opportunities in developing affordable housing schemes on a council level.

Strengthen Organisational Operations and Sustainability

NSROC has been assisting member councils to maintain and improve services for the community. This has been achieved through activities such as sharing best practice information through our Professional Officers Groups, supporting the community recycling centres, and making it easier for councils to work together and access government funding.

NSROC Breakfast October 2022

The 2022 NSROC Networking Breakfast took place on October 12th, 2022 at Parliament House. It featured State Government Ministers, Federal local members, representatives from IPART, the Department of Planning and Environment, and representatives from all NSROC member councils. Topics discussed included local government financial sustainability, reform of Building and Development Certifiers, the new Sustainable Buildings SEPP, infrastructure contributions, wildlife management on development sites, and planning decision transparency. The event provided an important opportunity for NSROC and its members councillors to highlight to government representatives the key issues facing local government.

Joint Procurement

Joint procurement allows councils to procure products and services more effectively and efficiently by leveraging their combined buying power. NSROC continues to maintain a shared Tenderlink service for its member councils that is an important tool for engaging suppliers and vendors for projects and services for the Northern Sydney region.

NSROC managed the joint procurement of a corporate (council operations) emissions monitoring and reporting service for member councils and the Northern Beaches. We also continue to manage the NSROC shared Asphalt contract for member councils.

NSROC Member Roadshow

NSROC President and Mayor of Mosman, Carolyn Corrigan and the Executive Director, Meg Montgomery, participated in a Roadshow visiting NSROC member councils of Hornsby, Hunters Hill, City of Ryde and North Sydney Councils.

The Roadshow provided an overview of recent NSROC successes and a briefing on the organisation's priorities going forward.

Visiting the member council sites in person allowed for better engagement and interaction between the NSROC leadership team and member council's elected councillors.

Shared Services

NSROC's shared services continued to operate satisfactorily. These are the shared internal audit service, community recycling centre, as well as support for the Northern Sydney Waste Services Alliance which is responsible for the collective for the management of waste for six member councils. Opportunities to establish new shared services are regularly reviewed.

Supporting Member Councils

NSROC maintained an environmental scan for financial support (including grants) and economic stimulus opportunities. This information was shared with GMAC and relevant POGs.

NSROC's Website

NSROC has continued to maintain a contemporary website that features images from each of our member councils to showcase the natural beauty and cultural assets of the region.

The website provides information:

- To member councils and the general community about NSROC's activities, services and the region,
- To NSROC's funding bodies and builds NSROC's reputation as a key contact for the region beyond our member councils.

Website visitors can obtain information about NSROC and its member councils as well as access copies of NSROC's annual reports, business plans, strategies, and submissions. A community information page for the Northern Sydney Community Recycling centre is also hosted here.

Submissions

NSROC is committed to advocating for the shared positions and priorities of its member councils, for the Northern Sydney region, and beyond. Lodging formal submissions has been a key strategic tool for NSROC to seek changes to government policy, legislation and regulation that will result in improved outcomes for the community.

The NSW State election held in March 2023 resulted in fewer opportunities to make submissions in 2022-23 when compared to previous years. This was due to the 'caretaker period' in the lead up to the election, followed by a period when the incoming government finalised its approach to implementing its election commitments.

To ensure NSROC's shared priorities remained well understood the Executive Director actively engaged with key government agencies and put forward the region's agenda outside the formal submission process.

During the 2022-23 period, NSROC was pleased to support its member councils by lodging the following submissions.

TOPIC + RECIPIENT	NSROC KEY POINTS
<p>Development Applications: Assessment and Determination Stages</p> <p>Audit Office of NSW</p>	<p><i>Submitted 8 September 2022</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged the Audit Office's recognition of the impact of the current skills shortage across the planning sector. • Noted that the assessment and determination of development applications does not operate on a full cost recovery basis. • Suggested that if fees were instead indexed over the period, councils would have better resourced teams. Accordingly, the associated time taken to assess and determine development applications would be reduced.
<p>Ausgrid Draft Plan 2024-29</p> <p>Ausgrid</p>	<p><i>Submitted 18 October 2022</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged Ausgrid's role in enabling smart technology deployment for a low emissions future but is disappointed by Ausgrid's tepid commitment to fairer feed-in tariffs pricing. NSROC believes this to be crucial to incentivise emission reduction investments. NSROC recommended against imposing export charges as feeding electricity into the network, especially during peak times, reduces the need for network investment. • Noted councils are eager to collaborate with Ausgrid on technology integration, including community batteries, charging infrastructure, and environmental monitoring. Member councils have expressed a willingness to offer assistance with planning regulations and resolving concerns related to emissions reduction investments' impact on safety and urban aesthetics. • Advocated for public EV charging infrastructure, especially for multi-unit dwellings, and supported LED upgrades for public lighting with smart sensors for Smart Cities functionality. • Endorsed Ausgrid's efforts to enhance network resilience, encompassing resistance to climatic events, disaster response, and cybersecurity measures.

TOPIC + RECIPIENT	NSROC KEY POINTS
<p>Review of the Rate Methodology</p> <p>IPART</p>	<p><i>Submitted 4 November 2022</i></p> <p>NSROC recommended that the Rate Peg Methodology should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be future facing and reduce the lag between data and when the rate peg increase takes effect. • Be flexible and reflect the differences between councils wherever possible. • Use the NSW Local Government (State) Award combined with any legislated increases (such as in the Superannuation Guarantee rate) as a benchmark and as a primary input to the rate peg calculation. The rate peg should never be set at a rate lower than the known forward looking remuneration increases.
<p>Inquiry into Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contributions) Bill 2023</p> <p>Portfolio Committee 7 - Planning and Environment</p>	<p><i>Submitted on 8 June 2023</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighted that the Housing Productivity Contribution has the potential to negatively impact local councils' capacity to provide public amenity. • Supported the concept of nexus, NSROC considered both levels of government should demonstrate nexus for works proposed. • Supported transparency in prioritising and delivering public infrastructure and that it should be informed by local governments. • Stated that the proposed plan will affect councils' capacity to negotiate equitable community benefits for infrastructure supporting housing through Voluntary Planning Agreements. • Maintained the strong position that residences and community infrastructure must be developed simultaneously to ensure that amenities are accessible to the increasing number of residents.

Professional Officers Groups

Communications and Media Working Group

The Communications and Media POG convened four meetings in 2022-23. Members explored the local implementation of the Office of Local Government NSW's (OLG's) Model Social Media Code, aligning their existing practices with the latest regulations and council policies to maintain compliance and effectiveness.

The group discussed the negotiation of Special Rate Variations (SRV's) and highlighted the importance of a robust communication and engagement process. The POG also considered topics such as the utilisation of hard copy advertising and pre/post-state election actions. The POG contributed to NSROC's advocacy campaign on waste and resource management. The group also explored the implications of using AI technology in drafting processes.

Arts and Cultural Services

The Arts and Cultural Services POG met five times during 2022-23, with participation from Northern Beaches Council. Members shared their event program and encouraged cross-region promotion where possible. Discussions focussed on various festivals, art competitions, and ensuring strong community engagement. The Group also considered the role of public art as a form of cultural infrastructure within the community.

With World Pride scheduled in Sydney from February 17th to March 5th, the group explored ways to integrate art and events in Northern Sydney to attract both local residents and visitors. Members actively collaborated on applications for Create NSW Grants.

This POG played a crucial role in fostering community organisations' efforts to discuss, plan, and promote the arts within their local communities, with many council members highlighting its importance.

Sports and Recreation

The Sports and Recreation POG met three times during 2022-23. The POG's biggest collaborative work for the period was the commissioning of the *Review of Supply and Demand for Sports Facilities in the NSROC Region* study.

The study was conducted by Otium and POG members actively collaborated with them over 3 workshops to ensure all relevant information was offered and feedback provided on data and methodologies. The results have been released to the POG members for their discussion and review before it is released publicly.

Additionally, the POG discussed the importance of Female Friendly sports facilities that are functional and safe. The POG shared individual council plans to increase their availability over the region with consultation from female players in the community.

POG members shared experiences implementing new online booking systems that allow community members to utilise council facilities, discussing actions that worked well and areas for improvement.

Financial Services

The Financial Services POG met three times over the 2022-23 period. The POG discussed a variety of topics impacting on council financial sustainability including Emergency Service assets and levies, council rates, and the waste levy. The Group also shared approaches to audit and considered the Audit Office report on Local Government 2022.

Members discussed the implications of the IPART Review of the Rate Peg Methodology. Members actively engaged in the workshops facilitated by IPART who welcomed advocacy from NSROC's input and advocacy activities.

The POG discussed the likely financial impact of the lack of waste infrastructure across the region, reviewing the latest waste project briefs alongside the trial of the FOGO program.

Members noted the increases in CPI and the implications on council budgets as general cost of living pressures were seen across the state over the financial period. The POG also considered the importance of the implementation and review of Cyber Security controls and policies around financial practices to protect member councils.

Local Emergency Management Operations

During 2022-23, the Local Emergency Management POG held three meetings to address various emergency management matters. These discussions included items such as cyber security concerns arising from access to council IT systems by the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the development of an emergency management waste sub-plan.

The POG also discussed the comprehensive review and audit of evacuation centres, including the establishment of standards for these facilities.

The group raised concerns regarding crisis management guidelines, particularly in the context of communication and information gaps related to road closures and hazards. During the year, merging two Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) into one was also flagged by Resilience NSW, focusing on combining Willoughby City Council (WCC) and Lane Cove Council (LCC) and North Sydney and Mosman LEMCs into a single entity.

Discussions also included the Disaster Dashboard initiative, suggesting its transition into a Reconstruction Authority of NSW project to enhance local-level emergency response capabilities.

Community Services

In 2022-23, the Community Services POG engaged in a range of vital discussions and activities over four meetings. These included reviewing the progress of the 'Impact of social and cultural infrastructure on liveability' literature review, conducted by Western Sydney University's Institute of Culture & Society.

The group also delved into the adjustment of community facility projections considering revised population growth estimates and explored improved data collection methods for key performance and service indicators for council-managed community facilities.

Key issues explored included Child Safe Councils, updates to the Social and Cultural Infrastructure Strategy, and funding changes in the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

The POG also ensured updates on council activities were shared, collectively contributing to enhancing community services and infrastructure.

Environmental Sustainability

In 2022-23, the Environmental Sustainability POG met four times. Topics addressed included a feasibility study for expanding community access to renewable energy, corporate emissions information monitoring and electric vehicle fleet management.

Led by NSROC, the POG undertook also the joint procurement of a platform to monitor emissions from council operations, utility billing and administration, community PV projects, environmental upgrade agreements, and renewable energy procurement, all of which contributes significantly to emission reduction efforts in the region.

Northern Sydney Transport Leadership Group

Northern Sydney Transport Leadership Group (NSTLG) is a working group with members from NSROC's member councils, Department of Planning and Environment, Transport NSW, and Greater Cities Commission (GCC).

The NSTLG is a forum for information sharing on initiatives across the region to improve the management of transport infrastructure and services. In particular the group seeks to ensure that local communities are best positioned to build on the benefits delivered by major state infrastructure investment.

In 2022-23, the NSTLG:

- Discussed EV infrastructure roll out across the region and the impact of amendments to the State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) (transport and infrastructure).
- E-Scooter trials in NSW.
- Community engagement initiatives in the region, such as Lower North Shore place-based transport state's plan.
- Discussion on existing major infrastructure projects and active transport initiatives.



Pictured: The Canopy Stage, Lane Cove

Waste Advisory Group

The WAG is a collaboration forum for senior staff responsible for waste management and resource recovery at our member councils. Working at both a strategic and operational level, the WAG helps NSROC to develop advocacy positions, consultation responses and identify potential projects ready for endorsement by GMAC and the Board.

The WAG also provides an opportunity for NSROC to engage council waste staff about relevant issues raised by the NSW EPA or by other metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils.

The WAG met monthly and this year one of its key contributions was helping finalise the Regional Waste Strategy. In addition to providing input into regional projects such as the Organics Implications Study or the Organics Site Options Report, the WAG also informed the regional submission to the Office of Local Government's consultation on procurement guidelines.

WAG members provided valuable feedback on the Sydney Water project and to SSROC as they sought input into the feasibility of creating additional processing capacity for organics and commingled recycling respectively.

Northern Planners Group

The Northern Planners Group met monthly to share information on planning issues and reforms. In addition to council representatives, the meetings were attended by seniors staff from the DPE and representatives from the Greater Cities Commission. NSROC is an active participant in the Northern Planners Group providing regular updates on NSROC activities and ensuring planners are aware of proposed reforms across the local government sector.

In 2022-23 the Northern Planners Group shared approaches to increase supply of senior housing and design improvements for buildings and infrastructure. They played a key role in advocacy activities relating to reforms of the regulations governing the installation of electrical vehicle chargers on public land. The Group compiled feedback for DPE on the usability of the Planning Portal and discussed the local implications of the State Government's Housing and Productivity Contribution reforms.

The Group actively engaged with the GCC via workshops and other mechanisms to contribute to the development of the Government's Region and City Plans including housing and employment targets. Housing supply and affordability are regularly discussed including the implications of Build to Rent developments.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
CRC	Community Recycling Centre
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EV	Electric Vehicle
E-WASTE	Electronic Waste
FOGO	Food Organics and Garden Organics
GCC	Greater Cities Commission
GMAC	General Managers Advisory Committee
IPART	Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
LGA	Local Government Area
LGNSW	Local Government New South Wales
MP	Member of Parliament
MWRR	Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery
NSROC	Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
NSW	New South Wales
POG	Professional Officer Group
ROC	Regional Organisation of Councils
RWS	Regional Waste Strategy
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SRV	Special Rate Variations
SSROC	Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
WAG	Waste Advisory Group
WASM	Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy
WSROC	Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

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