



State of the Inner West Report October 2024

Progress in delivering the Community
Strategic Plan – Our Inner West 2036



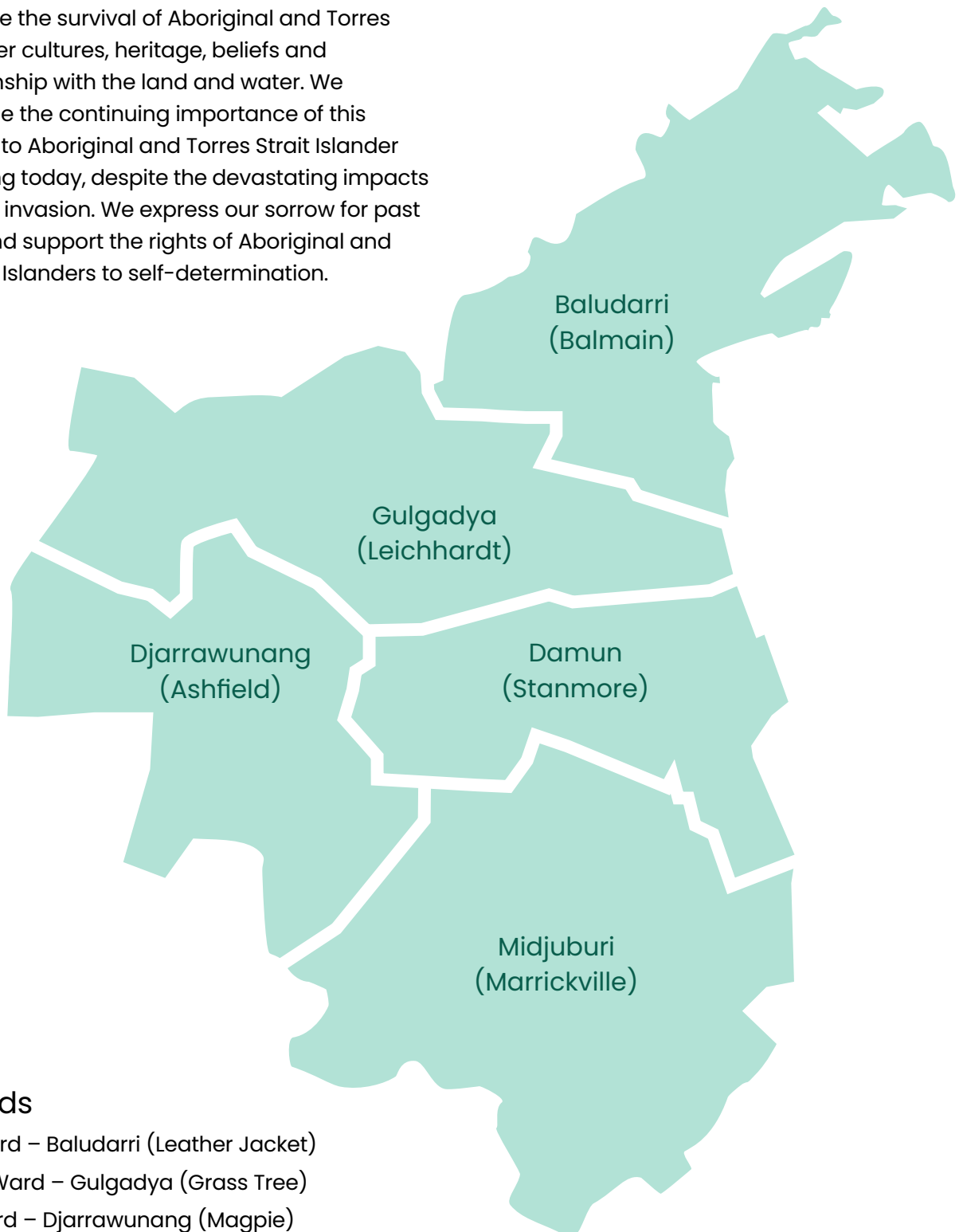


Fish Traps by Edwards Clarke, on the Bay Run

Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora Nation, who are the traditional custodians of the lands in which the Inner West local government area is situated.

We celebrate the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, beliefs and their relationship with the land and water. We acknowledge the continuing importance of this relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living today, despite the devastating impacts of European invasion. We express our sorrow for past injustices and support the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to self-determination.



LGA Wards

- Balmain Ward – Baludarri (Leather Jacket)
- Leichhardt Ward – Gulgadya (Grass Tree)
- Ashfield Ward – Djarrawunang (Magpie)
- Stanmore Ward – Damun (Port Jackson Fig)
- Marrickville Ward – Midjuburi (Lillypilly)

The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir perform at the opening of the Inner West Pride Centre



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About this report

The State of the Inner West Report 2021-24 outlines progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan – *Our Inner West 2036* during the previous elected Council's term of office. The aim of the report is to provide the community and the new Council, elected in September 2024, with an update on how Council and other stakeholders are progressing towards achieving the community's vision and aspirations for the future.

The report provides key information for the newly elected Council which sets the scene for the term 2024-28 and assists it to review the Community Strategic Plan by June 2025.

The report highlights achievements against the five strategic directions of *Our Inner West 2036*, and progress towards or away from its indicators. These are a selected set of measures which indicate quality of life in the Inner West and progress on each of the strategic directions.

High level financial information for the period is contained in the final section of the report.

What is the Community Strategic Plan?

Every council in NSW creates a Community Strategic Plan, with and on behalf of the community. The plan sets out the community's vision and aspirations for the future, and strategies to achieve these.

While Council is the custodian of the plan, it is a whole-of-community-responsibility – many partners are needed to work together to accomplish the desired results. Partners include residents, ratepayers, local community organisations, businesses and industry groups, Council, State and Federal Governments.

The vision and strategies of the Community Strategic Plan cascade down to the Delivery Program, a four year plan created each new term, which guides all Council's work, in service of the Inner West community.

For further information about the planning process, visit Council's website www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/about/the-council/plans-performance-budget-and-reporting



General Manager's Message

Inner West Council has worked hard in this term to achieve some remarkable results whilst also strengthening and consolidating our financial position. Together – our community, the Councillors and staff – can look back over this term with satisfaction at what has been achieved.

We have delivered some once in a generation projects such as the long awaited Leichhardt Skate Park and the newly refurbished Inner West Pride Centre in partnership with LGBTIQ+ organisation Twenty10, relocated the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and reopened the Summer Hill Community Centre with operator 3Bridges.

We also secured a \$40M funding deal to upgrade historic Leichhardt Oval as well as funding to install 136 Electric Vehicle charging stations throughout the Inner West. We have also converted 7 of our town halls to arts and cultural venues available free of charge for exhibition, performance and rehearsal.

We instituted the hugely successful Enmore Road Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP), the first in NSW, and are proposing further SEPs throughout the Inner West. We also provided a \$7.5M Main Streets Revitalisation Fund to deliver improvements to our main streets in partnership with local businesses.

We became the first Council in NSW to be powered by 100% renewable energy and 100% divested from fossil fuels. We created the Inner West Sustainability Hub in our old Summer Hill Depot, planted over 1000 trees a year and achieved 56,574 kW of solar capacity across the LGA, helping to power homes, businesses, schools and Council operations.

Our FOGO Food Recycling Service was introduced in October 2023 and to date has diverted 15,892 tonnes of food and garden waste from landfill, saving 33,469 tonnes of carbon emissions from our atmosphere. This is equivalent to taking 18,317 passenger vehicles off the road for a year.

We are close to completing construction of the magnificent \$59M GreenWay, an active transport and environmental corridor that links the Cooks River to Iron Cove, due to open in 2025. We have also co-created the state's first Aboriginal survival memorial in Yeo Park Ashfield with the Aboriginal community. We have also created the Lewis Herman Reserve in Ashfield, a purpose-built dementia park as well as King George Park inclusive playground, the first of 5 inclusive playgrounds planned for children and young people with disability.

The focus on improving our service to residents has been realised with improvements to our customer service including, a Service Charter, Customer Experience Strategy, Mobile Customer Service Stalls and monthly Local Matters Forums. All of these achievements, innovations and improvements contributed to the Inner West winning the prestigious 2023 AR Bluett Award for most progressive council in NSW.
















Council is in a strong financial position through prudent management and investments with surpluses forecast into the near future but there is more to do to ensure we can continue to deliver better services to the community. That's why we are following a program of continuous improvement and we will measure our progress in accordance with the Australian Business Excellence Framework.

I would like to thank the Councillors and staff for their hard work and dedication during this term and I am confident our residents will enjoy the benefits of all the hard work undertaken over the past three years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gainsford', written in a cursive style.

Peter Gainsford
General Manager, Inner West Council

Our Councillors 2021 – 2024

<p>Balmain Ward Baludari (Leather jacket)</p>	 <p>Darcy Byrne (Labor) Mayor darcy.byrne@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 02 9335 2157</p>	 <p>Councillor Kobi Shetty (Green) kobi.shetty@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0417 427 654</p>	 <p>Councillor John Stamolis (Independent) john.stamolis@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0408 448 285</p>
<p>Stammore Ward Damun (Port Jackson Fig)</p>	 <p>Councillor Liz Atkins (Green) liz.atkins@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0407 239 951</p>	 <p>Chloe Smith (Labor) Deputy Mayor 2023-24 chloe.smith@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0412 985 935</p>	 <p>Councillor Pauline Lockie (Independent) pauline.lockie@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0434 690 544</p>
<p>Ashfield Ward Djarrawunang (Magpie)</p>	 <p>Councillor Dylan Griffiths (Green) dylan.griffiths@innerwest.nsw.gov.au</p>	 <p>Councillor Mark Drury (Labor) mark.drury@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0448 722 942</p>	 <p>Councillor Jessica D'Arienzo (Labor) Deputy Mayor 2021-22 jessica.dariento@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0408 505 622</p>
<p>Leichhardt Ward Gulgadya (Grass Tree)</p>	 <p>Councillor Marghanita Da Cruz (Green) marghanita.da.cruz@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0490 788 943</p>	 <p>Councillor Philippa Scott (Labor) Deputy Mayor 2022-23 philippa.scott@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0412 935 713</p>	 <p>Councillor Timothy Stephens (Labor) timothy.stephens@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0418 474 248</p>
<p>Marrickville Ward Mijuburi (Lillypilly)</p>	 <p>Councillor Mat Howard (Labor) mat.howard@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0412 645 115</p>	 <p>Councillor Justine Langford (Green) justine.langford@innerwest.nsw.gov.au 0481 452 283</p>	 <p>Councillor Zoi Tsardoulis (Labor) zoi.tsardoulis@innerwest.nsw.gov.au</p>

These councillors represented Inner West from December 2021 – September 2024.
The term was shorter than the usual four years due to COVID.

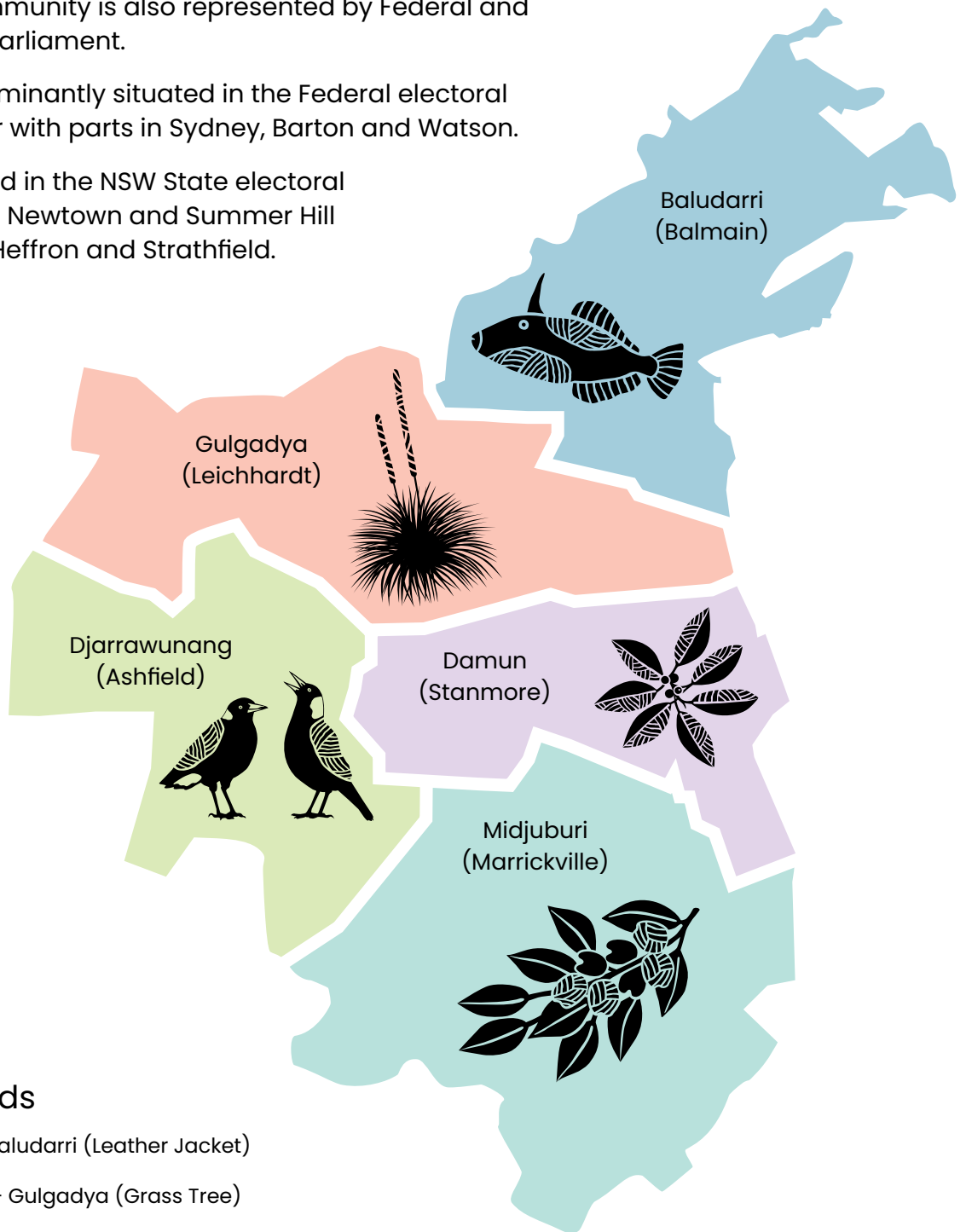
Inner West local government area wards

Inner West local government area is divided into five wards.
Three councillors are elected for each ward.

The Inner West community is also represented by Federal and State Members of Parliament.

Inner West is predominantly situated in the Federal electoral district of Grayndler with parts in Sydney, Barton and Watson.

Inner West is located in the NSW State electoral districts of Balmain, Newtown and Summer Hill and small parts in Heffron and Strathfield.



Inner West Wards

- Balmain Ward – Baludarri (Leather Jacket)
- Leichhardt Ward – Gulgadya (Grass Tree)
- Ashfield Ward – Djarrawunang (Magpie)
- Stanmore Ward – Damun (Port Jackson Fig)
- Marrickville Ward – Midjuburi (Lillypilly)

Snapshot of achievements 2021-2024



Expanded food recycling (FOGO) to every home in the Inner West, massively reducing carbon emissions



Planted over 1,000 trees each year



Secured funding for 136 public electric vehicle charging stations across the Inner West



Established the Inner West Sustainability Hub which co-locates the Green Living Centre, The Bower, Dress for Success and Re Place



Achieved 56,574 kW of solar capacity across the LGA, helping to power homes, businesses, schools and Council operations



First council in Australia to be 100% powered by renewable energy and 100% divested of fossil fuels



Protected heritage pubs



Invested \$3.7M in safe and accessible walking through the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan



Convened 13 Local Democracy Groups to provide input to Council's decision making and activities



Made Enmore Road the first Special Entertainment Precinct in NSW



Adopted the Inner West Cycling Strategy and Action Plan



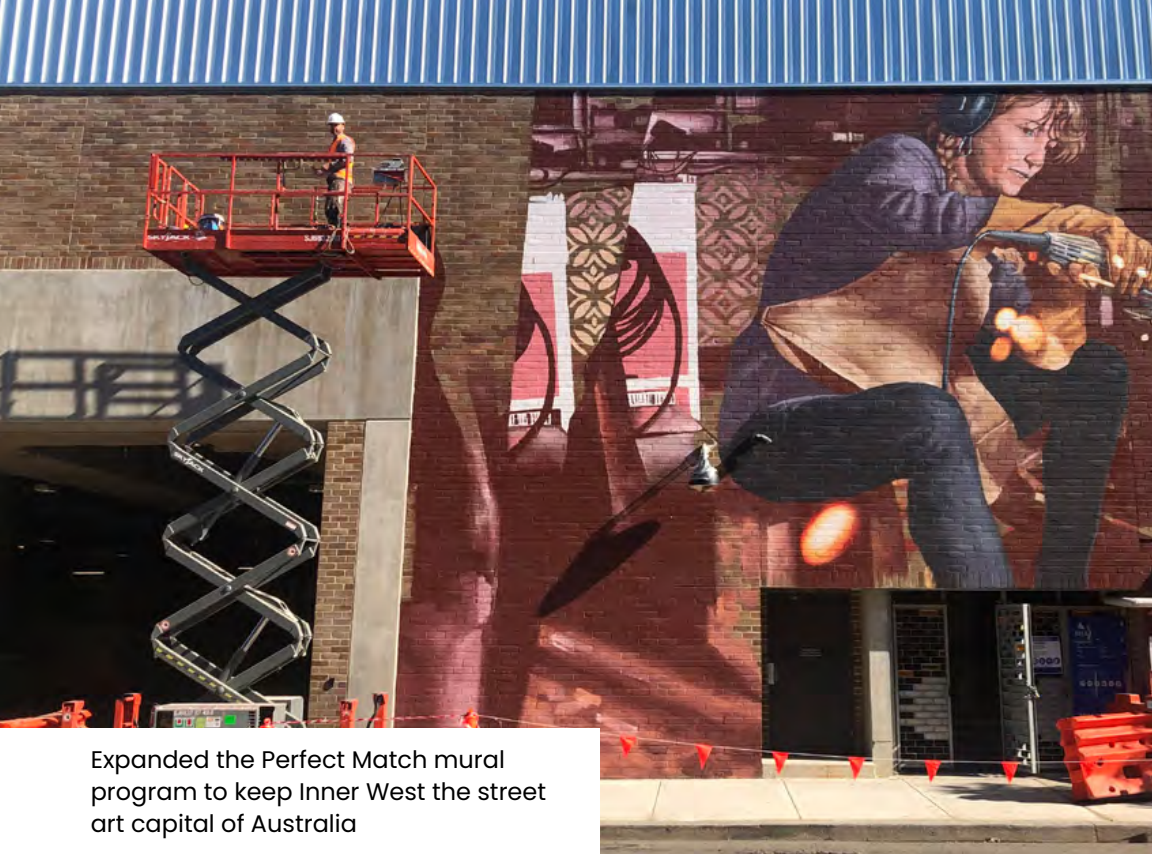
Created a \$7.5M main streets revitalisation fund to deliver improvements in partnership with local business



Substantially built the \$59M the Cooks to Cove GreenWay (completion due 2025)



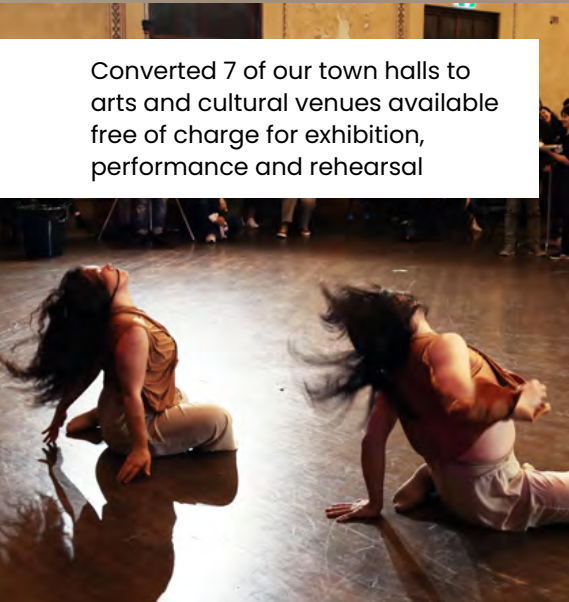
Provided over \$2M in grants funding for local projects and community organisations



Expanded the Perfect Match mural program to keep Inner West the street art capital of Australia



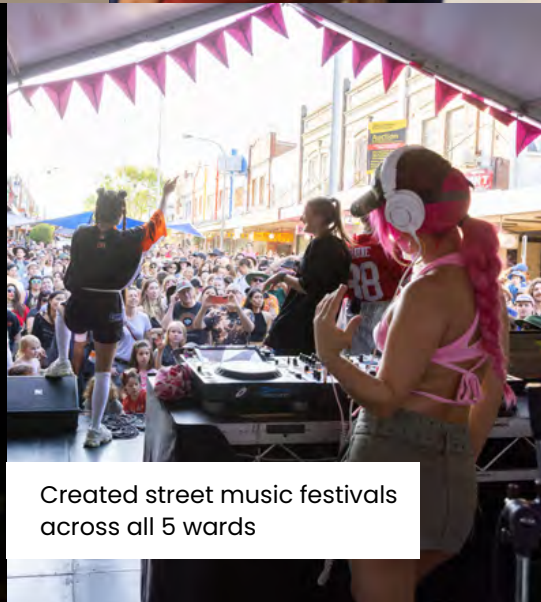
Held Economic development summits and created the Economic Development Strategy



Converted 7 of our town halls to arts and cultural venues available free of charge for exhibition, performance and rehearsal



Established the Inner West Film Festival



Created street music festivals across all 5 wards



Delivered the Leichhardt Skate Park



Delivered King George Park inclusive playground, the first of 5 inclusive playgrounds for children and young people with disability



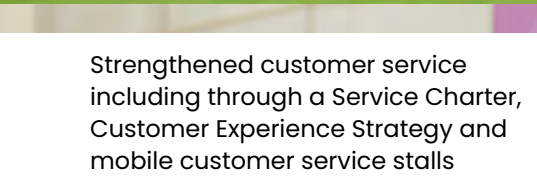
Secured a \$40M funding deal to save Leichhardt Oval



Held an innovative deliberative forum with a 'mini-public' of 100 representative residents



Won the 2023 AR Bluett Award for most progressive council in NSW



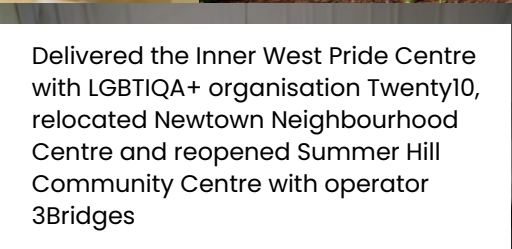
Strengthened customer service including through a Service Charter, Customer Experience Strategy and mobile customer service stalls



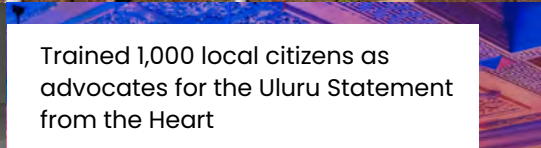
Co-created the first Aboriginal survival memorial in Yeo Park Ashfield with Aboriginal community



Celebrated World Pride and launched Pride Square, Newtown



Delivered the Inner West Pride Centre with LGBTQIA+ organisation Twenty10, relocated Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and reopened Summer Hill Community Centre with operator 3Bridges



Trained 1,000 local citizens as advocates for the Uluru Statement from the Heart



Awards won

2024 Financial Review Sustainability Leaders

- Winner - Property and Construction

2024 LG NSW Excellence Awards

- Winner - Innovative Leadership (population over 150,000) Award for Lewis Herman Reserve – Creation of NSW's First Dementia-Friendly Park

2024 Australasian Reporting Awards

- Winner - Gold, Annual Report 2022/23 Annual Report

2024 National Awards for Local Government

- Winner Waste Management – Community Recycling Centre Rap Video

2023 AR Bluett Memorial Award

- Winner - 2023 AR Bluett Award Metro/Major Regional Award

2023 NSW Youth Work Awards

- Winner – Outstanding Partnership – Youth Week Working Group and local youth agencies

2023 ARI Awards of Excellence

- Winner – Accessibility Award, Ashfield Aquatic Centre
- Winner – Award of Excellence, Simon Duck

2023 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government

- Winner – Alternative Pathways Award (Metro) – Mary Boustani, ICT Systems Engineer
- Winner – Employment Diversity Award (Metro)

2023 Australian Business Awards

- Winner – The Australian Business Award for Employer of Choice

2023 Local Government Week Awards

- Winner, Most Inclusive Youth Week Program
- Highly commended, RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards (Division C, population >70,000) – Uluru Training

2023 Australasian Reporting Awards (ARA)

- Winner, Bronze, Excellence in Reporting – 2021-22 Annual Report

2023 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards

- Winner, Community Partnerships (Population Over 150,000) – Love Your Home Ground (litter prevention project)

2023 National Trust Heritage Awards

- Highly Commended, Education and Interpretation, History Site Study – Marrickville Metro – Inner West Council Libraries

2023 Royal Life Saving Awards – 'The Aquas'

- Winner, Excellence in Aquatic Supervision

2022 Excellence in the Environment Awards

- Overall Category Winner and Winner – Division C (LGA with over 70,000 residents) – Local Sustainability Award for Powering Towards Zero Emissions
- Winner – Division C – Behaviour Change in Waste Award for Championing Food Recycling in Apartments

2022 National Trust (New South Wales) Heritage Awards

- Winner – President's Prize – Dawn Fraser Baths

2022 Master Builders Awards

- Winner – Excellence in Construction (Sporting Facilities) – Ashfield Aquatic Centre
- Winner – Excellence in Construction (Refurbishment/ Renovation/Extension) – Haberfield Library
- Winner – Excellence in Construction (Restoration/ Adaptive Re-use of an Historic Building) – Dawn Fraser Baths

2022 Local Government Week Awards

- Winner – Most Inclusive Youth Week Program

Australian Library Design Awards

- Winner – Public Libraries – Marrickville Library
- Winner – Members' Choice – Marrickville Library

Local Government NSW Awards

- Winner – Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award – Gadigal-Wangal Wayfinding Project

Australian Institute of Project Management – Project Management Achievement Awards

- Winner – NSW Project of the Year (Government) – Ashfield Aquatic Centre redevelopment

The Salvation Army – Multicultural Awards

- Winner – Salvos Multicultural Welcome Project Award – Community Refugee Welcome Centre

Progress on delivering our Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan *Our Inner West 2036* sets out the community vision and five strategic directions for the future.

Each strategic direction has:

- outcomes that the community wants to achieve
- strategies to achieve the outcomes
- indicators – selected measures which indicate quality of life in the Inner West and progress on each of the strategic directions

The next pages contain a summary of *Our Inner West 2036* including the outcomes and strategies under each strategic direction.

The summary is followed by the strategic directions in detail, including the indicators of progress, graphs that show whether movement is towards, away from or maintain the desired direction, and achievements during the term.



Our Inner West 2036 – plan on a page

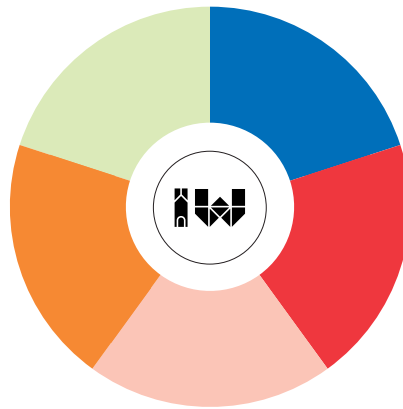
1. An ecologically sustainable Inner West.

Outcomes

- 1.1: The Inner West Community is recognised for its leadership in sustainability and tackling climate change.
- 1.2: An increasing and resilient network of green corridors provide habitat for plants and animals
- 1.3: Waterways are healthy and the community is water-sensitive, treating water as a precious resource
- 1.4 Air quality is good and air pollution is managed effectively
- 1.5 Inner West is zero emissions, climate adapted and resilient to the changing climate
- 1.6 Inner West is a zero waste community with an active share economy

The Inner West community wants to achieve five Strategic Directions by the year 2036. The Community Strategic Plan *Our Inner West 2036*, sets out the outcomes that describe success, and the strategies for how we will get there.

This high level plan, part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, guides all Council's work.



2. Liveable, connected neighbourhoods and transport

Outcomes

- 2.1: Development is designed for sustainability, net zero and improves health and wellbeing of the community
- 2.2: The unique character and heritage of neighbourhoods is retained and enhanced
- 2.3: Public spaces are welcoming, accessible, clean and safe
- 2.4: People have a roof over their head and a safe, secure place to call home
- 2.5: Public transport is reliable, accessible, connected and interconnected
- 2.6: People walk, cycle and move around the Inner West with ease

3. Creative communities and a strong economy

Outcomes

- 3.1: Creativity and culture are valued and celebrated
- 3.2: Inner West remains the engine room of creative industries and services
- 3.3: The local economy is thriving
- 3.4: Employment is diverse and accessible

4. Healthy, resilient and caring communities

Outcomes

- 4.1: The Inner West community is welcoming and connected
- 4.2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and culture flourish and enrich the Inner West
- 4.3: People have opportunities to participate, and develop their health and wellbeing
- 4.4: People have access to the services and facilities they need at all stages of life and abilities

5. Progressive, responsive and effective civic leadership

Outcomes

- 5.1: Council is responsive and service-focused
- 5.2: Council makes responsible decisions to manage finite resources in the best interest of current and future communities
- 5.3: People are well informed and actively engaged in local decision making and problem solving
- 5.4: Partnerships and collaboration are valued and enhance community leadership creating positive change

Five strategic directions for Inner West's future

Our Inner West 2036 identifies five strategic directions for Council and its partners to focus on to achieve the community's vision.

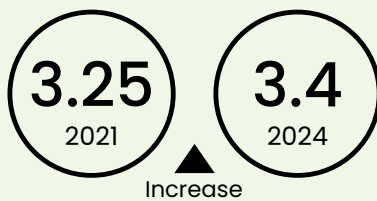
Council's progress against each strategic direction is highlighted in this section.





Strategic Direction 1: An ecologically sustainable Inner West

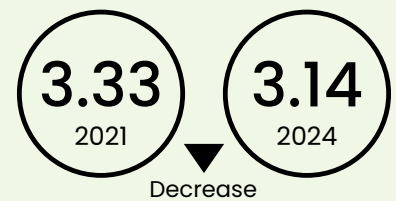
Satisfaction with environmental education programs and initiatives
Mean ratings out of 5



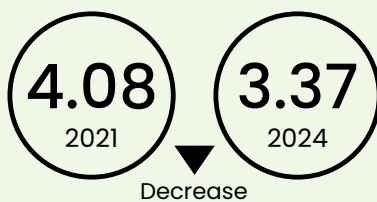
Satisfaction with encouraging recycling
Mean ratings out of 5



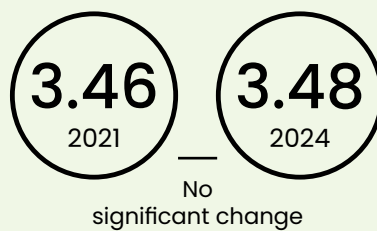
Satisfaction with flood management
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with household garbage collection
Mean ratings out of 5



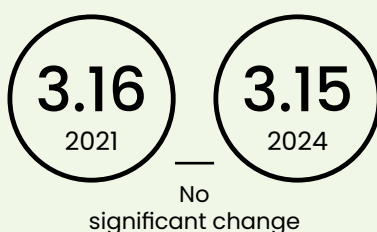
Satisfaction with Council's protection of the natural environment
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with removal of illegally dumped rubbish
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with tree management
Mean ratings



Tree canopy coverage

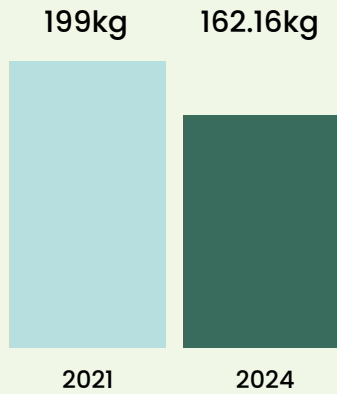
Council has adopted the State Government's SEED portal (the central resource for Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data) which provides a consistent approach to data collection across the Greater Sydney region. Tree canopy increased slightly from 2019 to 2022 and will be measured again in 2025.

17.56%
in 2019

18.55%
in 2022

Annual residential waste to landfill

Per resident



21ha

of natural areas Council is protecting and restoring across the LGA.

There will be an increase of 1 ha once the NSW Government transfers Rozelle Parklands to Council.

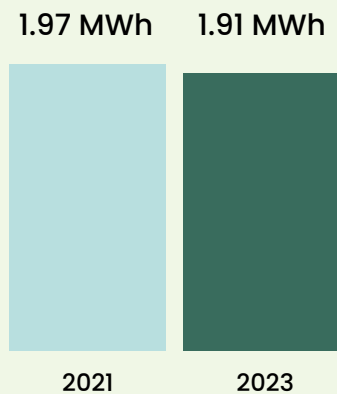
100%

Inner West Council 100% divested from fossil fuels and uses 100% renewable electricity.

This was achieved in 2023 – 2 years ahead of the target!

Annual grid-derived residential energy consumption

Per resident



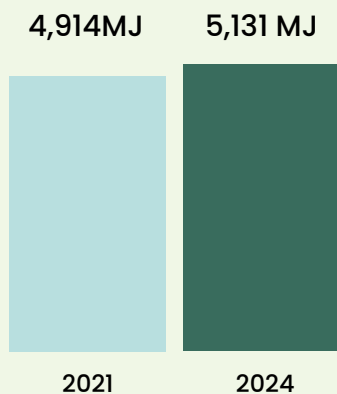
1

Swimming sites in Parramatta and Cooks Rivers in the Inner West.

Plans for Callan Park swim site is progressing and preparations have commenced for the Mort Bay swim site.

Residential gas consumption

Per resident



Achievements: An ecologically sustainable Inner West

The Inner West community is recognised for its leadership in sustainability and tackling climate change

Climate action and renewable energy

In the 2021–24 term, Inner West began purchasing 100% renewable electricity from NSW solar farms. Inner West was the first council in Australia to be powered by 100% renewable electricity and 100% divested of fossil fuels. Our 100% renewable electricity supply was achieved two years earlier than our target of 2025.

Council continued to increase rooftop solar PV on our properties, with capacity growing by 232kW to a total of 965kW. Solar energy is now helping to power Council's pools, libraries, early learning services and offices. Community solar capacity across the LGA grew to 56,574kW.

Council reduced its operational carbon emissions by 70% during the term and locked in policies to drive further reductions with our Fleet Transition and Gas Transition Plans.

Council's multi-year LED street lighting upgrade project with Ausgrid is 95% complete as of June 2024, reducing electricity from street lighting by almost 40% compared to the 2018/19 baseline.

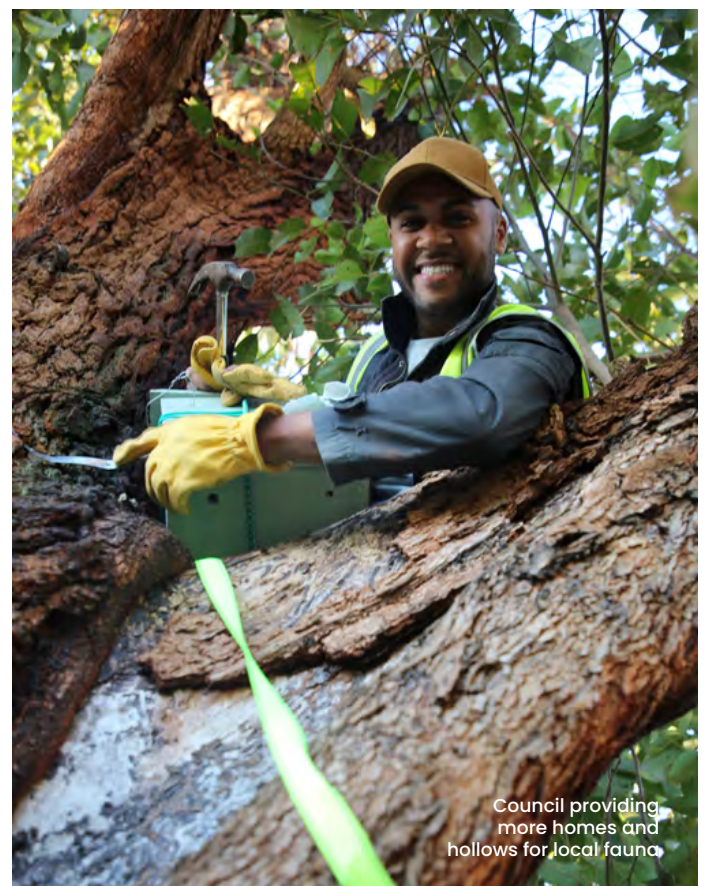
Environment awards

Council has been acknowledged for its sustainability leadership and tackling climate change.

In 2022, Council was the overall category winner for Excellence in the Environment Awards, held by

Local Government NSW to recognise outstanding achievements in managing and protecting the environment. Council won awards for Community Partnerships for our 'Love Your Home Ground' (litter prevention project), Behaviour Change in Waste (precursor to FOGO) and the overall Local Sustainability Award for Powering Towards Zero Emissions.

The Australian Financial Review named Council as an Environmental Sustainability Leader in its annual Environmental Sustainability Awards. Council has also been the recipient of many other awards that recognise it as a leader at tackling climate change. This includes being the winner of Waste Management category of the National Local Government Awards for our Community Recycling Centre rap video.



Council providing more homes and hollows for local fauna

An increasing and resilient network of green corridors provide habitat for plants and animals

Blue Green Grid Strategy

In December 2023, Council adopted its Blue-Green Grid Strategy. This strategy sets out and promotes the creation of a network of high-quality open spaces that support recreation, biodiversity, connectivity and waterway health and recognise and embrace Aboriginal culture. This is a place-based strategy that connects spaces with the wider public realm through enhancing creek corridors, transport routes, suburban streets, footpaths and cycleways.

The Blue-Green Grid Strategy responds to aspirations of the local community by creating a green trellis across the LGA, equipping pathways and active transport routes for better connectivity and improving access and interaction with green spaces and waterways. The Grid forms a web of 85 links across the Inner West and neighbouring council areas. The Iron Cove Creek Master Plan has also been adopted. This sets out the recommendations and actions for a green grid link approximately 2.5 kilometre long between Ashfield, Croydon and Iron Cove.

Bush care volunteers

Council has 13 active bush care sites that volunteers attend at various times throughout the week and on weekends. Each site is well attended and volunteers are engaged in the restoration and regeneration of natural areas and land conservation activities across the LGA. A trainer regularly provides training and assistance on the various bush care activities. From 2022 to 2024, there were over 13,000 volunteer attendances that assisted bush care sites to improve the natural environment.

Biodiversity Strategy

In 2024 Council completed a draft Biodiversity Strategy, which sets out the framework for protecting biodiversity, working with the community and leading by example. The Biodiversity Strategy includes revised threatened species mapping across the LGA. Council actively participates in the Parramatta River Catchment Group and the Cooks River Alliance to highlight and protect threatened species.

Council has commenced development of a draft Urban Forest Policy and Strategy that will integrate with other tree related strategic directions of Council. Operation plans are being developed for public tree development consistent with the NSW Government's Sydney Green Grid.

Council's community nurseries collect seed, propagate and supply local provenance plants for Council's natural areas including for the GreenWay and restoration work across the LGA. These community nurseries also supply plants for residents and events such as for National Tree Day and at local schools as well as for volunteer activities. Residents are also able to access plants from these nurseries.

Two micro forest sites have been installed and will be evaluated once the sites are established.



Powerful Owl



Tree planting

Council recognises that trees are essential green infrastructure particularly in highly urbanised areas and are vital to creating a healthy and sustainable city. Street trees provide multiple benefits, including shade, cooling, reducing pollution, habitat, improved mental health and giving our streets a sense of character. Council has planted over 1,000 trees every year with a budget of \$2M per year in recurrent funding since 2022. Each year Council invites the community to National Tree Day plantings and provides locally sourced, endemic flora for the community to plant.

Despite a significant loss of trees from State Government infrastructure projects including WestConnex, we grew our overall tree canopy from 17.56% in 2019 to 18.55% in 2022. The canopy coverage will be measured again in 2025.

Verge Gardening Policy

The Verge Gardening Policy has been adopted and Council staff continue to work with residents to bring new 'sustainable streets' projects online. A competition is held annually in the Inner West to recognise verge gardeners and to encourage participation in the program.



Waterways are healthy and the community is water sensitive, treating water as a precious resource

Council has recently completed a \$15M stormwater and relining replacement program and incorporates water sensitive urban design features in our streetscapes and parks. Water sensitive features include rain gardens, bioswales, constructed wetlands, stormwater harvesting schemes and, of course, rainwater tanks.

Council runs a three-part workshop series for residents called 'water sensitive design on your property' that introduces water sensitive urban design principles. It includes a practical hands-on workshop that uses these design principles to build a water sensitive feature on a participant's property.

Air quality is good and air pollution is managed effectively

Electric vehicles

Council has committed to transitioning its entire fleet to electric vehicles before 2030/31 - already 100% of Council's leaseback vehicles are hybrid. Council has developed a Fleet Transition Plan and has purchased 39 electric cars as a start to achieving a fully electric fleet.

Council has adopted an Electric Vehicle Encouragement Strategy and secured funding for 136 public electric vehicle charging stations to be rolled out across the Inner West. The new chargers will range from 7-75 kilowatts and will include pole-mounted, pedestal and 'kiosk' EV chargers. They will be installed over the next 12 months on kerbsides and in Council car parks and be open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are particularly designed for drivers without off-street parking. Installation of the chargers will help to make the Inner West one of the most sustainable LGAs in Australia.

Inner West is a zero-waste community with an active share economy

The Inner West Sustainability Hub

The Sustainability Hub stands out as a key, practical measure that brings to life the community's environmental vision. Council's former depot at Summer Hill has been transformed into a sustainability hub that is an important mechanism to develop a circular economy and achieve our zero waste targets. It provides infrastructure, facilities and opportunities where Council can engage practically with local residents with circular economy objectives. It hosts markets, workshops and community meetings focused on reducing waste and living more sustainably at home in the Inner West and connects sustainability start-ups.

Community partners are co-located with Council's Green Living Centre. Each partner has their own venture, programs and clientele. These have grown alongside each other, as customers of each service cross-pollinate and learn about new approaches to sustainability and the circular economy. This co-location supports cross organisation volunteering and sharing or swapping of donated resources. The Sustainability Hub strongly embeds important circular economy principles and actions such as keeping materials in use and reusing materials.

A key objective of the Sustainability Hub is to make the circular economy and sustainable living accessible to all members of our community and not just those who can afford it. Council supports organisations financially through our accommodation grants, allowing not-for-profits to build their capacity within the Inner West.

Council created a rap video to promote its Community Recycling Centres to younger people in the community. This target audience were underrepresented users of the two Community Recycling Centres. The rap video starring Council's Resource Recovery team was used to promote understanding that problem wastes do not belong in the bin. The video features diverse people and

has been publicised extensively through Council's social media channels and showcased through local cinema advertising.

Food Organics Garden Organics

In October 2023 Council rolled out the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) collection to all households across the Inner West. This was the most impactful resource recovery service change for residents in 30 years. The primary objective for FOGO is to reduce waste to landfill and its associated financial and environmental costs including reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

Before the service commenced, Council estimated (using tonnage and audit data) that a 50% FOGO recovery rate would equate to 1,112 tonnes per month. The service has exceeded this rate, recovering an average of 1,405 tonnes of FOGO per month. Between 9 October 2023 and 17 September 2024, 15,461 tonnes of FOGO have been collected which equates to 5.2 Olympic swimming pools of avoided waste.

A total of 32,469 tonnes CO₂-e has been avoided which is the equivalent carbon emissions of:

- Powering 9,386 residential homes
- Taking 18,317 passenger vehicles off the road
- Powering 73,214 domestic fridges

The recent community satisfaction survey found that nearly 90% of Inner West residents are aware of the food and organic waste recycling service and 90% stated that they are at least somewhat committed to food recycling.

As the FOGO collected is being composted to support food growing, collection quality is essential. Inner West has been applauded by the processor, TopSoil Organics, who estimated an average contamination rate of around 2%, and reported the impressively clean product to the EPA and industry. This contamination rate is significantly lower than many councils that have had FOGO embedded for many years (up to 18%) and lower than the NSW average rate of 3%.

Footprints EcoFestival

Each spring, Council hosts the successful Footprints EcoFestival which promotes sustainable living at Whites Creek Valley Park in Annandale. Stallholders from community and school groups and businesses present talks and performances that celebrate sustainable futures and environmental awareness.

All stallholder products, operations and activities at the EcoFestival, must be consistent with a commitment to environmental and social sustainability and minimise the impact of the festival especially in relation to waste management. In 2024 Council included food and recycling at the event to minimise waste to landfill. As with all Council events, the festival was free of plastic single use balloons, plastic straws, cutlery, cups, bags, containers and bottles. By agreement with the coffee vendor, hot drinks were only served in reusable Inner West coffee cups which were collected onsite and washed for reuse at other events. The site was dressed with reusable materials including fabric bunting, chalkboards and flags.

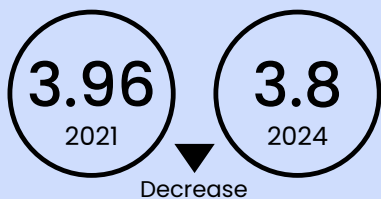
Very little waste was generated from the event, with an estimated 481 litres of garbage and 337 litres of compostable/recyclable materials. Based on an estimated 2,000 patrons, each produced approximately 240 grams of garbage and 170 grams of recoverable resources (organics/recyclables).



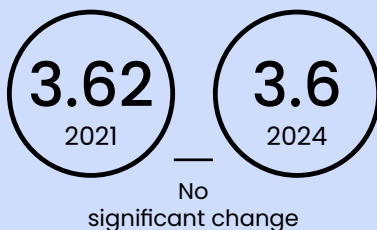


Strategic Direction 2: Liveable, connected neighbourhoods and transport

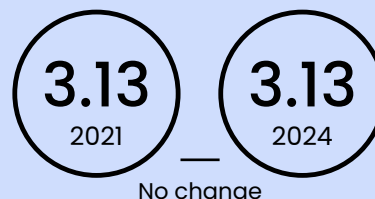
Satisfaction with access to public transport
Mean ratings out of 5



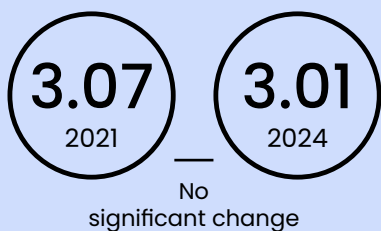
Satisfaction with appearance of your local area
Mean ratings out of 5



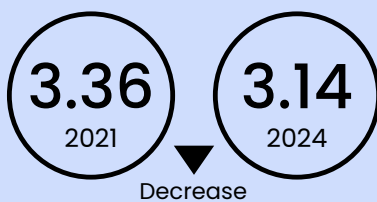
Satisfaction with building heights in town centres
Mean ratings out of 5



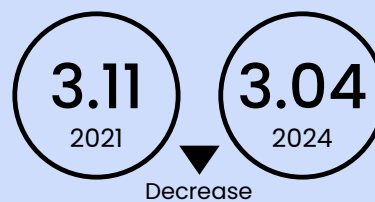
Satisfaction with cycleways
Mean ratings out of 5



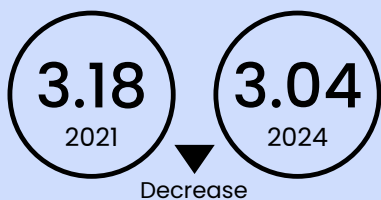
Satisfaction with graffiti removal
Mean ratings out of 5



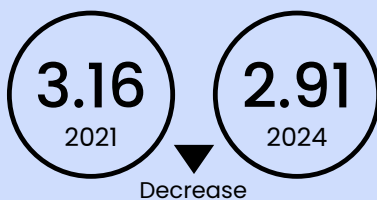
Satisfaction with long term planning for Council area
Mean ratings out of 5



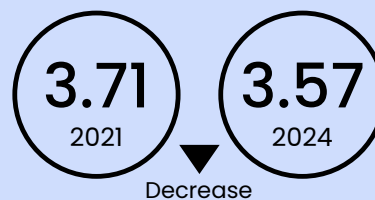
Satisfaction with maintaining footpaths
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with maintaining local roads excluding major routes
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with maintenance and cleaning of town centres
Mean ratings out of 5



98%

Of residents feel safe during the day in the Inner West in 2024. This has stayed the same since 2021.



4%

Of residents think housing in the Inner West is affordable in 2024. This has dropped from 10% in 2021.



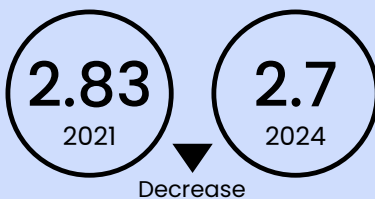
80%

Of residents feel safe at night in the Inner West in 2024. This has improved since 2021, when 77% of residents felt safe at night.



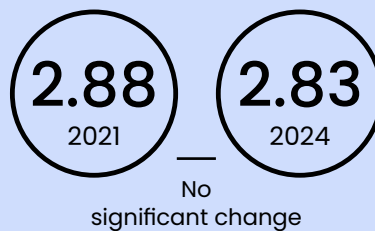
Satisfaction with management of parking

Mean ratings out of 5



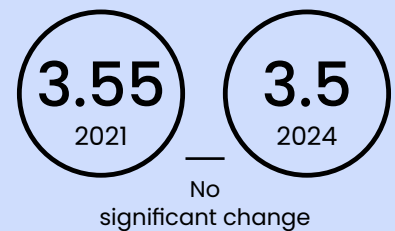
Satisfaction with managing development in the area

Mean ratings out of 5



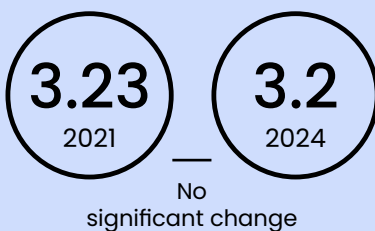
Satisfaction with protection of heritage buildings and items

Mean ratings out of 5



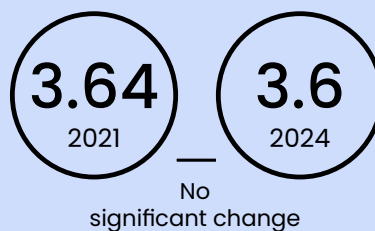
Satisfaction with protection of low rise residential areas

Mean ratings out of 5



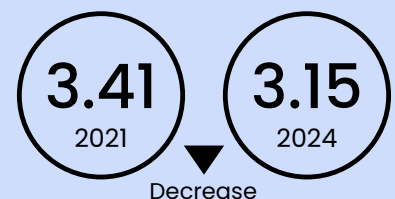
Satisfaction with safe public spaces

Mean ratings out of 5



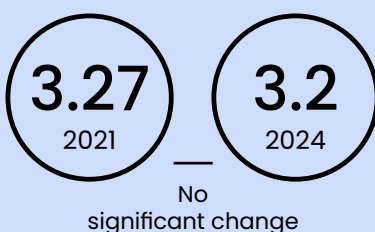
Satisfaction with stormwater management and flood mitigation

Mean ratings out of 5



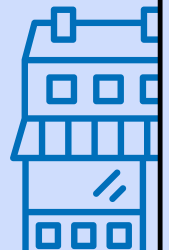
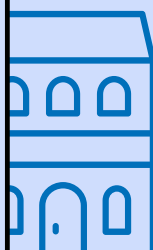
Satisfaction with traffic management and road safety

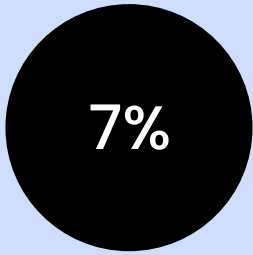
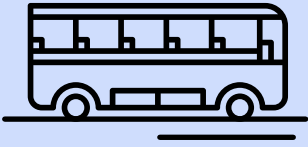
Mean ratings out of 5



95%

Of residents in 2024 think the Inner West is a good place to live. This number has stayed the same since 2021 when residents were last surveyed.

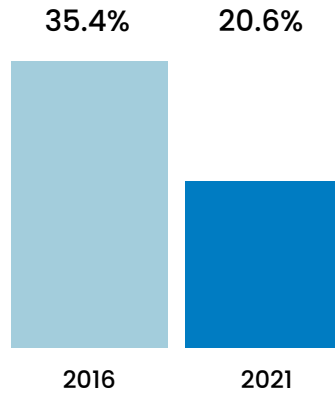




Of residents travelled to work by public transport when surveyed in 2021 as part of the ABS census. This exceptionally low result was due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 when few people travelled to work. In the previous survey results in 2016, 38.2% of residents travelled to work by public transport.

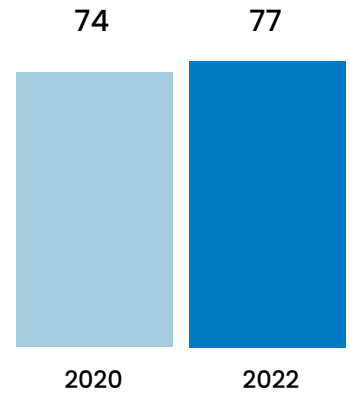
People who travel to work by car, as driver

From ABS census data



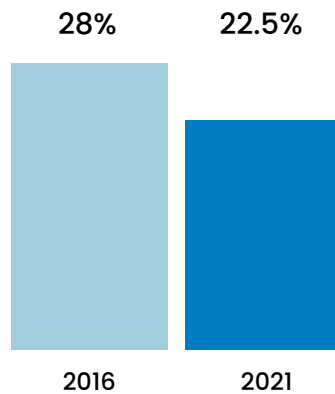
Serious road injuries in the Inner West

NSW Centre for Road Safety data



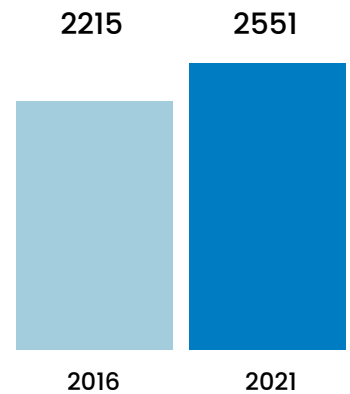
Car ownership

From ABS census data



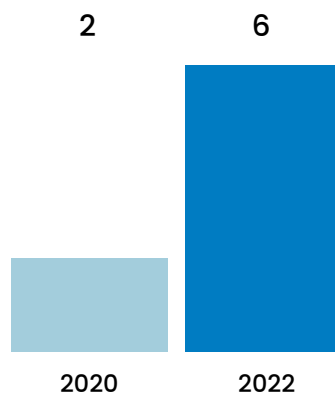
Estimate of homeless persons

From ABS census data

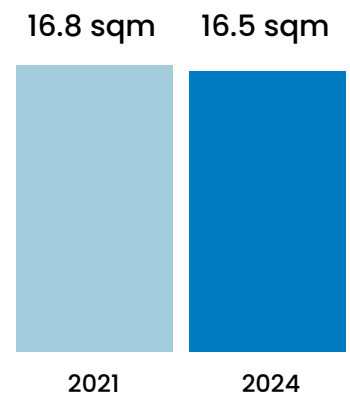


Road fatalities in the Inner West

NSW Centre for Road Safety data



Open space Per resident



Achievements: Liveable, connected neighbourhoods and transport

Development is designed for sustainability, net zero, and improves health and wellbeing of the community

Main Street revitalisation

Council created a main streets revitalisation fund for main street improvements in partnership with the Inner West community. This was a partnership opportunity for organisations to work together with Council, through new funding for improved infrastructure, public art and street furniture.

Local businesses and organisations such as chambers of commerce, community and arts organisations came together to suggest and make plans on how their main street could be revitalised. There was total funding of \$7.5M available for projects with up to \$1.5M allocated per project including quick improvements that have been undertaken while longer term master plans are developed.

Council also delivered a \$329K main street beautification program across the LGA with planting and paving improvements, fairy lights wrapping on trees, distinctive artworks including on street bins, upgrades to the Summer Hill Plaza and new banner designs along our main streets.

Development contributions plan adopted

In late 2022 Council adopted its Inner West Contributions Plan, which was recognised by the Planning Institute of Australia as best practice. The plan enables Council to collect contributions from new developments to help fund local infrastructure and services for residents and workers. It consolidated the nine existing plans from the Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt local government areas. The plan contains approximately \$597M of local infrastructure to be delivered up until 2036 and guides investment to ensure that our growing community has adequate and equitable access to local infrastructure.

Parramatta Road revitalisation

In 2016, the State Government endorsed the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS). This is a 30-year plan to renew the Parramatta Road Corridor including Leichhardt, Taverners Hill and Kings Bay/Croydon precincts in the Inner West. In the last term, Council undertook an extensive public consultation process to ensure that the community's voice was heard. Council then resolved to send the planning proposal to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Industry to be finalised.



The unique character and heritage of neighbourhoods is retained and enhanced

New heritage pub trails

As part of the \$7.5M Main Streets Revitalisation program, Council created a first-ever Heritage Pub Trail of famous Balmain and Rozelle pubs. Heritage Trail plaques include a QR code that takes people to a map of all the heritage pubs. The project recognises the historic contribution pubs have made to area and invites people to support the local economy.

Heritage pubs protection

The Inner West is home to some of Sydney's most iconic pubs and it is important to protect these vital community assets into the future. Council is committed to preserving and nurturing these heritage pubs and their unique heritage. Council has resolved to add 22 local pubs to the heritage register (in addition to the 26 hotels that already had heritage protection) to protect these long-standing institutions and keep the community's famous pub culture alive.

Whether it's the atmosphere, the food, the music, or the social connection, these listings are designed to preserve the Inner West's thriving pub culture.

Built Environment Awards

Council has two programs that contribute to and celebrate our understanding of the Inner West's built heritage: the Marrickville Medal for Conservation and the Inner West Urban Photography Competition.

The 2022 Marrickville Medal winners were:

- Winner - 29 Kingston Street, Haberfield
- Commendation for conservation - Callan Park Gates, Balmain Road, Lilyfield
- Commendation for Commercial Adaptive Reuse - 94 Illawarra Road, Marrickville
- Commendation for Community Project - 35-37 Dickson Street, Newtown
- Commendation for Interior Adaption - 118-132 Enmore Road, Newtown

The 2023 Marrickville Medal winners were:

- Winner - 59a Reynolds Street, Balmain
- Commendation for sustainability - 26 Silver Street, St Peters
- Commendation for Maintenance, Restoration & Reconstruction - 55 Livingstone Road, Petersham
- Commendation for Interpretive Adaptation - 27 Kintore Street, Dulwich Hill

The 2024 winners will be announced at an awards event on 19 October 2024.



Mowing at Marrickville Oval

Public spaces are welcoming, accessible, clean and safe

Main street cleaning and verge mowing

Inner West Council is one of the only councils that mows the verges. Street sweeping of residential streets is undertaken on a 40 working day cycle. Verge maintenance (mowing) is undertaken on a 20 working day cycle from October to March, and a 40 working day cycle from April to September. In this term Council introduced transparent information for the community to access schedules for verge mowing and street cleaning.

Public toilet strategy

Council continues to implement its public toilet strategy to upgrade and improve public spaces. Public toilet upgrades include HJ Mahoney Reserve completed in February 2024, Pioneers Park in December 2023, Easton Park in May 2023, and Camperdown Memorial Rest Park completed in 2022. Work began on the King Georges Park and Camdenville Park upgrades in 2024.

People have a roof over their head and a safe, secure place to call home

Housing challenges

Housing affordability and availability is one of the top challenges nominated by residents in the recent community satisfaction survey and only 4% agreed with the statement “Housing in the area is affordable”, down from 10% in 2021.

Council successfully fought to keep local planning controls rather than having State Government-led rezonings imposed on our community. Council has strongly advocated for affordable housing and renters’ rights and provided \$150,000 in emergency funding to Marrickville Legal Centre’s Inner West Tenants Advice Service to enable thousands of Inner West renters to receive advice and representation.

Affordable Housing Policy

Council’s Affordable Housing Policy, which was adopted in May 2022 aims to address the ongoing challenges associated with the need for affordable housing for low-income households particularly key workers. Council is now actively seeking to increase affordable housing supply through planning instruments and policies.

By October 2024, Council had acquired 25 affordable housing units through planning agreements. All surplus funds from these units are transferred to Council’s Affordable Housing Fund for future expenditure on affordable housing.

Housing Support Program

The Inner West faces the challenge of increased competition for land and housing resources within a highly urbanised area. Following an audit of Council-owned land, three sites are being progressed as opportunities for the development of affordable housing. Council is evaluating proposals from a number of Community Housing Providers to build more affordable housing on these sites.

Delivery of affordable housing on the Hay Street car park in partnership with Community Housing Provider, Link Wentworth is progressing with design concepts and feasibility studies for the development. Council is collaborating with the NSW Government to investigate opportunities to build more affordable housing on both Council and government owned sites within the Inner West.

Homelessness

Homelessness takes many forms, including sleeping rough, couch surfing and staying in unstable or overcrowded accommodation. The drivers of homelessness are complex and include a shortage of stable and affordable housing, family violence, long-term unemployment, family breakdown, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.

Council has also developed a short online course on homelessness for residents to give guidance on the best way for them to help. Council has strong partnerships with a range of local expert homelessness services and State Government agencies to form multi-agency outreach teams. These teams patrol the streets and parks of the Inner West early in the morning, mostly around Ashfield and Newtown, and provide support and referrals.

Public transport is reliable, accessible and interconnected

Sustainable transport

Sustainable transport – reducing car use and increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling – is key to increasing the vibrancy of local neighbourhoods, reducing traffic congestion, enabling better parking options, improving air quality and improving access to local places.

Council has a Car Sharing Policy to reduce car ownership, the demand for street parking, reduce transport emissions and provide an additional transport option for the Inner West's growing population. Car sharing is well established in the Inner West and is an additional transport option for the growing population in the LGA.

Public transport

The Inner West is well served by public transport including buses, trains, light rail and ferries. The NSW Government provides public transport services.

Council supports active transport options across the LGA with construction of a safer cycling and walking network across the LGA that intersects with public transport options and new housing development. Council also has a role in advocating strongly for the Inner West community, including for the significant changes as the heavy rail line from Sydenham to Bankstown is converted to a Metro line and the Bays Precinct is developed.

People walk, cycle and move around the Inner West with ease

The GreenWay

The GreenWay is a once in a generation project that will positively change the Inner West forever. It is a 5.8 kilometre biodiversity and active transport corridor linking the Cooks River to Iron Cove, along the Inner West light rail route and Hawthorne Canal. Council has actively engaged with the community on all stages of the GreenWay construction to ensure that this significant project delivers the community vision.

After extensive community consultation on the master plan (2018) and concept design (2020), the construction of the GreenWay missing links commenced in 2023. At a total cost of \$59M, the works will be finished in 2025 with funding from the State Government and Inner West Council.

Completion of the missing links will unlock approximately 3ha of open space and enable the community to walk or ride easily and safely from the Cooks River to Iron Cove. The works include engineering feats such as microbat protective design and smart solar lighting at the Longport Street tunnel and a suspended walkway under Parramatta Road along Hawthorne Canal, which retains the heritage brick canal wall and features public art. Current work sites are Constitution Road, Cadigal Reserve, Lewisham West and Hercules parklands.

In late 2023, the GreenWay connection with the Bay Run was opened, further expanding this popular and essential shared bike/pedestrian project. The Davis Street tunnel work for the GreenWay began in early April 2024.

Inner West Cycling Strategy and Action Plan

In June 2023 Council adopted its Inner West Cycling Strategy and Action Plan. The aim is to expand the bike network across the Inner West and support more people riding a bike by making it a low stress and convenient transport option. This recognises and supports the growing use of different bikes and mobility devices including electric bikes and trikes, child and dog carriers, assisted wheelchairs and electric mobility scooters.

Completed bike links include the Lewisham to Newtown route with separated cycleways in Longport Street, Trafalgar Street and Railway Terrace Stanmore, and the Livingstone Road cycleway between Marrickville Park and the rail line. The new Bedwin Road Bridge provides dedicated cycling access between Edgeware Road and the Campbell Road cycleway and, as part of the Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Program, infrastructure to improve cycling access has been installed along the Parramatta Road corridor.

Other significant projects are in progress. Delivery of the GreenWay missing links will provide a cycling path within the light rail corridor between Parramatta Road and Dulwich Hill as well as road crossings. In combination with previously completed works in Richard Murden Reserve Haberfield and on local roads in Dulwich Hill, the GreenWay will provide a safe and continuous cycling link between Victoria Road Rozelle and the Cooks River cycleway.

The Pyrmont Bridge Road cycleway was delayed by the WestConnex tunnelling site which resulted in a high number of heavy vehicles using the exit point on Pyrmont Bridge Road. With construction of the WestConnex mainline tunnels now complete, Council is working with Transport for NSW to finalise an agreement for design and construction of “pop-up” style cycleway by Transport for NSW, with Council as project manager.

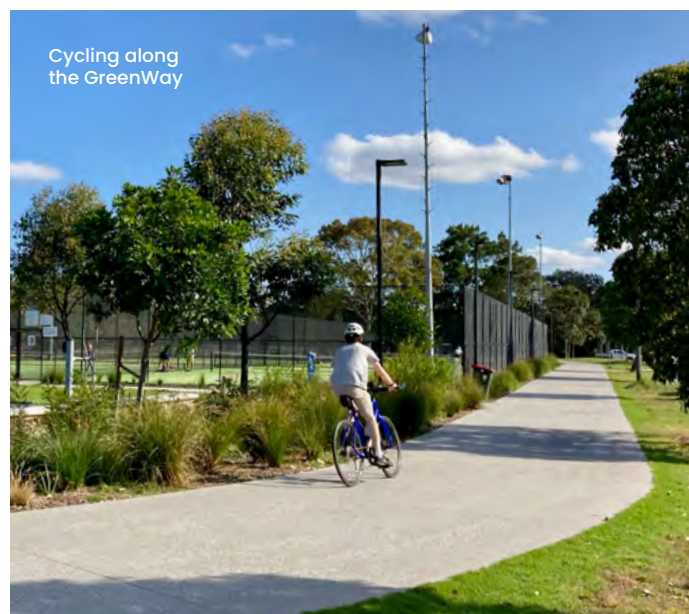
The St Peters to Sydenham Station bike link will connect the Campbell Street cycleway and Sydenham station via a pathway delivered by the WestConnex M8 project. The project includes on-road (mixed traffic) links between Mary Street, St Peters and Unwins Bridge

Road, a new crossing of Unwins Bridge Road at George Street and a separated cycleway in Burrows Avenue Sydenham. Progress has been impacted by Sydney Metro works at Sydenham Station and construction is expected to commence in 2025.

Council is working with Transport for NSW on the East-West Pedestrian and Cycle Link, a walking and cycling link alongside the T3 rail line which is currently undergoing conversion to Metro between Sydenham and Bankstown. Council has engaged consultants to complete the design of on-street links in the Inner West between Sydenham and Dulwich Hill.

Work on the Lilyfield Road bike link has been delayed by the significant construction impacts of the WestConnex Rozelle Interchange project. With the reopening of the Rozelle Parklands in April 2024 following the replacement of contaminated mulch, works to finalise the design are underway to provide a cycling link between the GreenWay and Bay Run as well as Annandale and Sydney city via Rozelle Parklands.

Other key projects in design include a connection between Ashfield Aquatic Centre and the Bay Run, guided by the Iron Cove Creek Masterplan which was adopted in April 2024, a bike link connecting Parramatta Road and Marrickville Park along West St (Regional Route 2) and upgrades to the Livingstone Road cycleway.



Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan

Council is working towards making all Inner West footpaths well-maintained, level and accessible so that everyone can safely travel around their local communities.

Council has a continuing program of renewal of condition 4 and 5 footpaths and invested \$6.3M from 2021-2024 to make footpaths safe and accessible for the community.

The Inner West Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) adopted by Council in November 2021 provides a comprehensive strategic action plan for improved pedestrian facilities. It aims to:

- improve pedestrian access and priority, particularly in areas of pedestrian concentration
- reduce pedestrian access severance and enhance safe and convenient crossing opportunities
- identify and resolve pedestrian crash clusters
- ensure that pedestrian facilities remain appropriate and relevant to the surrounding land use and pedestrian user groups

The Plan includes an audit of all pedestrian facilities, identification of key pedestrian routes and prioritised pedestrian safety improvements including:

- footpath and pedestrian crossing maintenance
- new and upgraded kerb ramps at intersections and other crossing points. Kerb ramp improvements are typically undertaken in association with nearby footpath renewal projects
- raised pedestrian crossings and other crossing improvements

Council has invested \$3.7M in delivering the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) since its adoption.

InnerWest@40

The Inner West has many local centres, urban hubs and main streets that are vibrant, walkable, and attractive. Council's Integrated Transport Strategy has presented the concept of 'InnerWest@40', proposing to adopt area-wide 40 kilometre per hour speed limits on local roads to improve road safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Council has built the evidence base and applied to Transport NSW for approval of the reduced speed limit on all local roads to improve safety for all road users.

Safe walking around schools

Council is supporting safe walking around schools through the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and ongoing series of Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) studies. Council is also undertaking the Active Travel to Schools study.

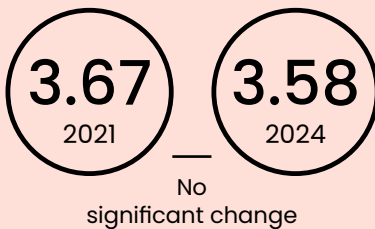


Nana Miss Koori performs as part of Council's Pride events

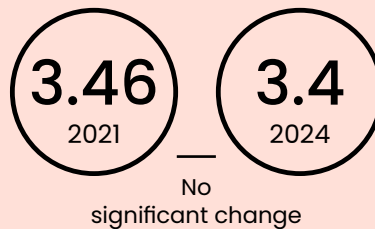


Strategic Direction 3: Creative communities and a strong economy

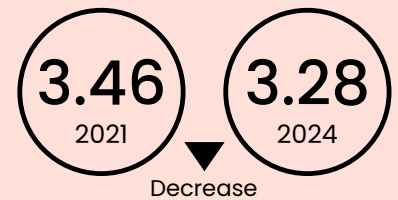
Satisfaction with festival and events programs in the Inner West
Mean ratings out of 5



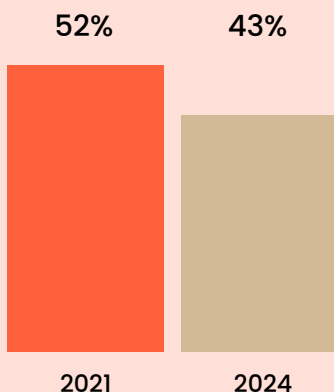
Satisfaction with support for local artists and creative industries
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with support for local jobs and business
Mean ratings out of 5



Residents who agree that local town centres are vibrant and economically healthy
From Community Satisfaction Survey data



49%

Of residents agree that they have enough opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities in 2024.
This has dropped from 54% in 2021.

Achievements: Creative communities and a strong economy

Creativity and culture are valued and celebrated

Arts and Music Recovery Plan

In June 2022, Council partnered with the Sydney Fringe Festival and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance to bring together over 200 representatives of the creative community and political leaders for the Inner West Arts Recovery Summit. The Summit aimed to mobilise local artists, creative businesses and supporters of the arts to resuscitate the sector and initiated the development of an Arts and Music Recovery Plan.

The Plan sets out a range of practical initiatives to ensure that the Inner West remains an innovative and sustainable creative force in the future. It has driven the reinvigoration of the Inner West creative sector over the last two years. A number of priorities coming out of the plan included prioritising Inner West creatives for all Council programs, provision of Council owned spaces to local creatives, focus on developing Aboriginal creatives, enhancing mentoring pathways and opportunities for young people in the arts, and making it easier to navigate processes for creatives to perform and exhibit in new ways.



Gerrie Mifsud
plays at Stanmore
Music Festival

Sid Tapia painting *Together We Planned*, as part of Council's Perfect Match program



Perfect Match

Our Perfect Match program goes from strength to strength with a total of over 170 site specific contemporary artworks enlivening Inner West walls since its inception in 2014. Originating as a unique initiative tackling unwanted tagging and graffiti, the program has quickly grown to mentoring emerging artists, fostering legitimate creative expression and creating meaningful site-specific large scale paintings in public spaces.

In 2022, Council was awarded a NSW Government grant of \$100,000 under its Graffiti Management scheme to boost the output of the already thriving Perfect Match program. This led to the commissioning of additional high profile street art works along major transport corridors. Council successfully demonstrated that 95% of the spaces are not tagged with graffiti again after an artwork is in place. In 2023, Council doubled the funding available for the Perfect Match program.

People with a visual disability can now appreciate the Perfect Match art with audio descriptions voiced by ABC presenter Nas Campanella provided for 20 works.

Cultural festivals and recognition

In 2023, after a three-year COVID hiatus, over 20,000 people flocked to Petersham's centre, Little Portugal, to experience the return of Bairro Português. This annual

festival has attracted thousands to the Inner West, where local businesses and performers showcase the finest Portuguese handicrafts, traditional dance, Fado music, and local food and wine.

In February 2021, Council voted to recognise the significant contributions of the Vietnamese community to the Inner West's cultural and economic life by renaming a precinct in the Marrickville-Midjuburi Ward. Following extensive engagement in 2021, the area between Marrickville Road and Warren Road, Marrickville, which houses many thriving businesses, including Vietnamese eateries and grocers, was selected. In April 2022, the name 'Little Vietnam' was approved. The Little Vietnam precinct was formally launched with a community celebration at Marrickville Pavilion in December 2022.

An artwork celebrating Vietnam's national flower featured on the launch invitation and has been rolled out on bin decals across the precinct. The work 'Dancing Goldies' by local artist, Christina Huynh depicts the two goldfish journeying between water and floating lotus flowers, paying homage to the Vietnamese migration story.

The renaming of Little Vietnam honours the stories of the many brave migrants who resettled here in the 1980s, enriching Australian society and helping to establish the Inner West as a vibrant multicultural hub.

Inner West remains the engine room of creative industries and services

Inner West Film Festival

In March 2023, Council brought its own Inner West Film Festival to the community. Launched by local resident and theatre great Miranda Otto, the festival was held at venues across the Inner West. It boasted an eclectic and fascinating selection of local premieres and retrospectives from Australia and abroad. From documentaries to short films, world and Australian premieres, award winners and major international film festival selections it reflected in the diversity of the Inner West community.

The film festival included a 35mm retro screening of Erskineville Kings, a star-studded feature film shot in the heart of the Inner West. A short film competition showcased works made in and around the Inner West from the best up and coming film makers in the local areas. A new film category has now become a permanent fixture in Council's Young Creatives Awards.

White Bay Power Station

The conversion of the White Bay Power Station into an arts, live performance and cultural venue has turned it into the new jewel in the crown for Inner West arts and cultural activities.

The Biennale was the perfect partner to launch this new creative precinct. The Biennale program Ten Thousand Suns was presented from March to June 2024 with free admission for all. Council worked with the Biennale to curate and expand our EDGE program of site-specific artistic installations, community and cultural activities at White Bay as part of the 2024 Biennale.

Town halls

To support our creative community, Council has opened up all seven town halls free-for-use as cultural and creative spaces. The town halls have all been converted to arts and cultural venues for live performance, rehearsal and exhibition. An \$800,000 investment in sound systems and audio-visual equipment to be used across all the venues and performance and recording studios has made the town halls even more attractive for artists to use. Staff provide a "concierge" service by assisting artists and organisations to identify the best venue for them and to curate effective use of these spaces.

The converted Marrickville Town Hall is the flagship for the program with the basement to be reinvented as a major performance space. It will be further upgraded in the coming months to finalise its conversion to a live performance venue. Rather than sitting empty for much of the time, the town halls will now be filled with music, dance, theatre and film. The initiative is breathing life back into them and welcoming more residents back through their doors. It will transform the capacity of local arts and creative industries and both professional and community arts organisations.

Community festivals and activations

Council delivered a wide range of festivals including Dulwich Hill Festival, Inner West Kids Fest, Summer Hill Festival, Lunar New Year and Jazz in the Park. Council also partnered with business, chambers and local organisations to support community-led events such as Norton Street Italian Festa and Stanmore Music Festival.

Marrickville Music Festival is a much loved flagship event that brings artists and community together to celebrate live music. It has a diverse program that showcases music in the Inner West and champions artists across multiple stages of unique programming and a variety of musical genres.

In this term Council expanded street music festivals across all five wards to harness and promote the creative power of live music in the Inner West. The live music activations have included the Inner West

Chamber Music Festival at Leichhardt Town Hall, the Generate Youth Festival, 2SER in Your Hood, Marrickville Pause and a two-day music activation event – Sham Fest – at Petersham Bowling Club.

EDGE is Council’s major initiative to profile, support and empower the arts sector with new opportunities and audiences. The program provides funding and resources to experiment with new ideas and engage with diverse creative communities in the development and presentation of new works. In 2023, EDGE GreenWay hosted shipping containers set up for artists to develop their work while immersed in the sights and sounds of the GreenWay. In 2024 EDGE Inner West was presented in partnership with the Biennale of Sydney across three weekends in April. EDGE Inner West featured a program of works by performance artists that considered the White Bay Power Station and Petersham Town Hall sites. The selected artists represented a roll call of excellence from a diverse cross section of art forms including the famous Legs on the Wall and Force Majeure. Well-known broadcasters and writers Benjamin Law and Yumi Stynes curated the talks program.

Council also commemorated significant civic events including ANZAC Day, International Women’s Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Remembrance Day and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia.

Young Creatives Award

The Young Creatives Award continues to showcase the talent and creativity for which the Inner West is known. The Award nurtures and creates opportunities for youth in creative industries, connections to Inner West creative networks and engages with the library collections and is open to all talented creatives aged 12–24 that live work or study in the Inner West in the categories of writing, visual arts and film. The Young Creatives was shortlisted at the NSW Local Government Awards in 2022 and the Youth Work Awards and won highly commended for the RH Dougherty Award in the Innovation in Special Events category of the NSW Local Government Week Awards.



The local economy is thriving

Enmore Road Special Entertainment Precinct

To support the revitalisation of entertainment and hospitality destinations post COVID, the NSW Government introduced special entertainment precincts to provide a different way for councils to manage amplified noise from licensed premises.

Beginning as a three-month trial in September 2022, Council created the Enmore Road Special Entertainment Precinct. Enmore Road provides a range of services such as cafes, restaurants, take away food and drink, retail, and other commercial services. At night it comes alive as one of Sydney's premier entertainment districts with pubs, small bars, restaurants, and the historic Enmore Theatre. Alongside this commercial mix is a dense residential neighbourhood made up of flats, shop top housing, Victorian terraces, and detached houses. The vibrancy and offerings that attract residents and businesses to the area, are often also sources of amenity conflict.

The pilot special entertainment precinct gave the Council the opportunity to explore solutions to these amenity conflicts. Community consultation after the initial pilot showed the community overwhelmingly supported Enmore Road being designated a special entertainment precinct. Enmore Road was subsequently designated a permanent Special Entertainment Precinct, the first in Australia. Using Enmore Road as an example more special entertainment precincts will be initiated in Marrickville, Dulwich Hill, Leichhardt, Balmain and Rozelle.

The special entertainment precincts are an important part of the Main Streets revitalisation, improving employment opportunities and stimulating the local economies.

Purple Flag

The NSW Government has recently accredited the Marrickville precinct which includes Illawarra and Marrickville Roads, with the Purple Flag accreditation. This is awarded to vibrant night-time economies that meet standards of excellence in vibrancy, diversity and safety at night. This includes good access to public transport, street lighting and great food and beverage. Over 20 businesses have worked with council and contributed to the achievement of the accreditation.

Economic development summits

Early in March and April 2023, Council hosted Erica Berholdt, CEO The Iconic and Michael Rodrigues, NSW 24 hour Economy Commissioner as guest speakers at its two economic development summits. The aim of the summits was to generate discussions on:

- how the local economy is performing post COVID 19
- how Council and stakeholders can work better together
- What opportunities can be identified to improve conditions for business to thrive.



Celebrate South King Street event

Employment is diverse and accessible

Draft Economic Development Strategy

Data from the Economic Development summits was used to develop Council's draft Economic Development Strategy, in mid-2024. Based on community wealth building principles, the role of the strategy is to help create jobs by supporting the growth of the local economy and making it more competitive and resilient. Council will continue to foster a strong relationship with local business chambers and the business community to help deliver on the various actions identified in the Strategic Plan, including working closely in partnership to help ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Protecting industrial and employment lands

Protecting and enhancing the economic base that our industrial and employment lands provide is fundamentally important to supporting our local economy. While the Inner West only has an extremely small amount of undeveloped employment lands, our existing industrial lands form a strong economic base. Some industrial areas have a thriving manufacturing sector that remains a significant employer in the suburbs of Marrickville, St Peters and Sydenham. The top employing industries in the LGA are healthcare, retail, construction, education/training and arts/creative industries. Council is working actively to support these industries.

Legs on the Wall perform at White Bay
Power Station as part of EDGE Inner West



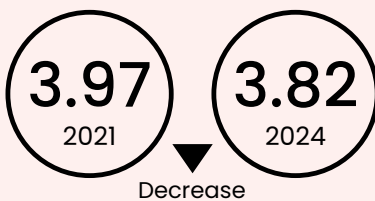


Inclusion Fest at
Marrickville Town hall

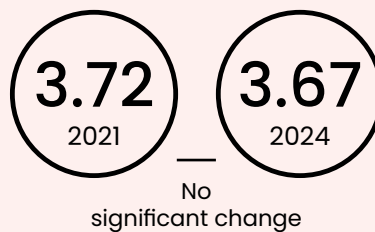


Strategic Direction 4: Healthy, resilient and caring communities

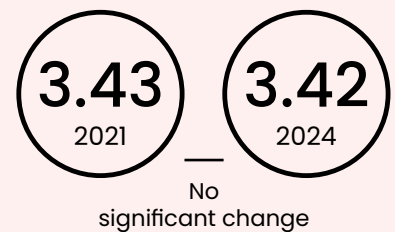
Satisfaction with the
availability of sporting
ovals, grounds and facilities
Mean ratings out of 5



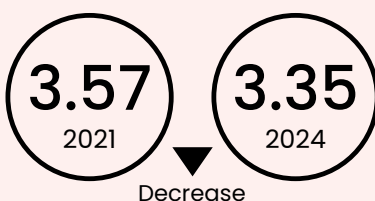
Satisfaction with
community centres
and facilities
Mean ratings out of 5



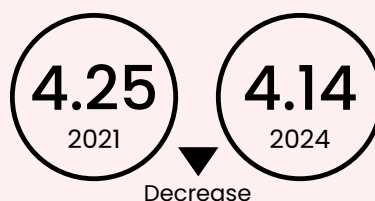
Satisfaction with
community education
programs e.g. English
classes, author talks, cycling
Mean ratings out of 5



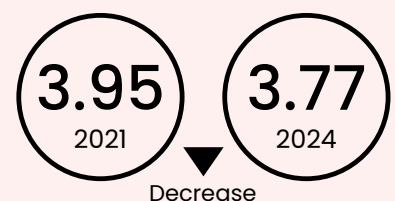
Satisfaction with
Council's childcare
service and programs
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with
library services
Mean ratings out of 5



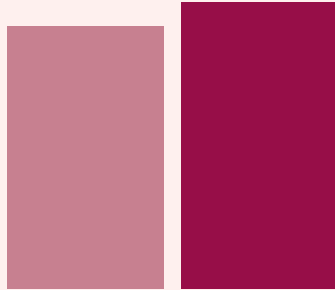
Satisfaction with
maintenance of local
parks, playgrounds and
sporting fields
Mean ratings out of 5



Areas of the Inner West within a 400m walkable catchment of a sizeable public park

From GIS map data

26,486,695 sqm 27,788,967 sqm



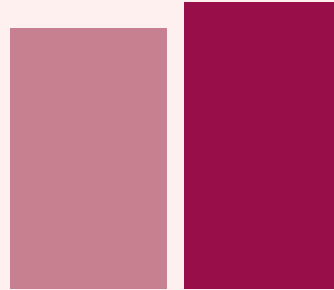
2021

2024

Percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable

From the Australian Early Childhood developmental data

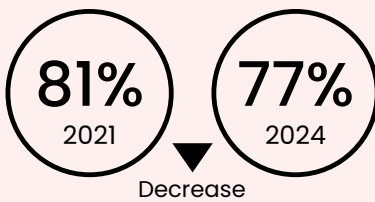
6.2% 6.8%



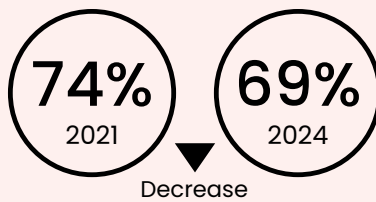
2018

2021

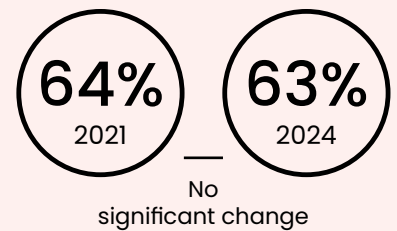
Residents who agree that the Inner West is a harmonious, respectful and inclusive community



Residents who agree that they feel part of their local community

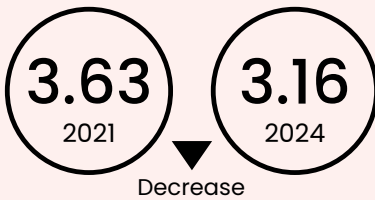


Residents who agree that they have enough opportunities to participate in sporting or recreational activities



Satisfaction with programs and support for newly arrived and migrant communities

Mean ratings out of 5



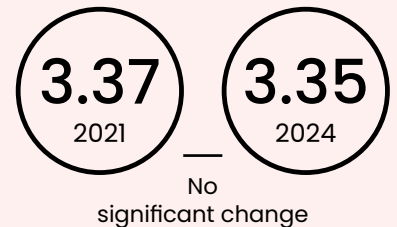
Satisfaction with promotion of pride in the community

Mean ratings out of 5



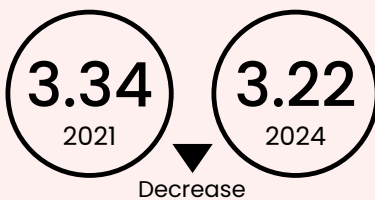
Satisfaction with provision of services for older residents

Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with Supports for people with a disability

Mean ratings out of 5



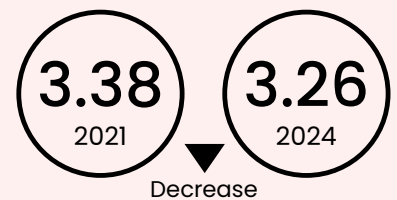
Satisfaction with swimming pools and aquatic centres

Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with youth programs and activities

Mean ratings out of 5



Achievements: Healthy, resilient and caring communities

The Inner West community is welcoming and connected

World Pride

Pride Inner West was a vibrant celebration of our local LGBTQ+ community presented in February/March 2023 with a celebration program that promoted our community with national and international media coverage. The community was invited to make a splash in our aquatic centres, honour LGBTQ trailblazers in our libraries, compete for the top title on our sporting fields and discover legendary legacies in our art spaces. Parks and aquatic centres were decorated with uniquely commissioned pride seats and art works in the public domain.

Pride Square

Council successfully applied to the NSW Geographic Naming Board to rename the public square in front of Newtown Town Hall to 'Pride Square' leading up to Sydney World Pride.

Pride Square was refurbished and a permanent Pride Beacon, a highly visible, 3-dimensional artwork, which celebrates and showcases diversity installed. The project featured strong community governance with a community-based working group overseeing each project stage.

Inner West Pride Centre

In August 2024, the Inner West Pride Centre was officially opened in the former Newtown Town Hall. The building has been completely restored to be fit for purpose for the community and Twenty10 who Council

has contracted to operate the centre. Twenty10 is a respected service provider for LGBTQIA+ people, their families and communities.

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Council collaborated with Newtown Neighbourhood Centre to turn the former Tom Foster Centre in Newtown into a purpose-built facility. The works created modern, accessible office spaces, a landscaped rear courtyard, large community hall and meeting rooms for hire, and a dedicated wing for walk-in services. In December 2022, Council handed the building to the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre to continue their important community work.

Summer Hill Community Centre

Following community engagement in 2020/21 Council sought a new operator of the Summer Hill Community Centre, located in the grounds of Darrell Jackson Memorial Gardens, Summer Hill. The Summer Hill Community Centre reopened in 2022 and is now home to 3Bridges, a not-for-profit organisation which, on behalf of Council, offers a range of programs and activities to help people be connected to the community – from Tai Chi and Aboriginal yarning circles to programs for children and art groups.

Community Refugee Welcome Centre

Council partners with Settlement Services International to provide the Community Refugee Welcome Centre (CRWC), a place for connection between the local community and refugees, and people seeking asylum. After a pause in programming due to COVID, the CRWC

recommended programs in the second half of 2022, delivering English and fitness classes, a TAFE course and a school holiday fun day.

In 2024 over 800 people visited the CRWC and participated in programs including three large events: International Women Day, Nowruz celebration (Persian New Year) and The Spirit of Welcome that marked Refugee Week.

First Council to raise the Disability Pride Flag

Inner West was the first council in Australia to raise the Disability Pride Flag for the International Day of People with Disability. A Disability Employment Forum was hosted and an Inclusive Festival was held to showcase programs and events.

Enhancing accessibility

Council is committed to delivering welcoming, inclusive and accessible events for all our community. While each festival or event is different, delivery now includes Auslan interpretation, and use of ramps and mobile matting for easier access for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility. The introduction of sensory spaces has also been a major success. They improve inclusion for people with cognitive or sensory disability in loud or overwhelming environments.

Seniors' Festival

Council delivered activities and events annually, as part of the NSW Seniors Festival. Initiatives included a Healthy Ageing community hub map and digital literacy resource circulated to local service providers. Two seven-week Local Health District falls prevention programs were delivered as part of the festival in 2024.



The Buuja Buuja dancers perform at the launch of Creative Town Halls at Petersham Town Hall



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture flourish and enrich the Inner West

Reconciliation Action Plan

A significant milestone was Council's adoption of its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan in September 2022. The Plan provides a Reconciliation approach for our whole community and Council. It has four focus areas – relationships, respect, opportunities and governance. It has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

Aboriginal Survival Memorials

Council and community collaborated to design and create the first of three Aboriginal Survival Memorials. This first Memorial, Breathe, by artists Nicole Monks and Maddison Gibbs, is in Yeo Park, Ashfield and reaffirms the community's commitment to the journey of Reconciliation. The innovative design practice saw community members work on-site with the Aboriginal horticulturalist and artists to create a place of safety and reflection, where engraved sandstone boulders act as portals to ancient stories. This is a place for non-Indigenous people to listen and understand the past and move towards a deeper understanding of the multi-generational impacts of colonial invasion.

People have opportunities to participate and develop their health and wellbeing

Leichhardt Skate Park

The new Leichhardt Skate Park is an example of Council's commitment to provide exceptional recreational spaces for our community. Launched in July 2023, the skate park includes a top-class skating bowl that can be used for skateboarding, bike riding and scootering. Council also delivered LED lighting for visual surveillance and safety, a shared path connecting to the Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre and a car park upgrade.

New tidal pool at Callan Park

After an exhaustive testing process, Council continues to work toward a new tidal pool at Callan Park. The draft plan is for a fifty-metre pool incorporating an

accessible jetty and two moored pontoons that bathers and families can use for sunbathing and diving. The pool is proposed to be located on the popular Bay Run and will be a modern counterpart to the nearby, historic Dawn Fraser Baths. Work so far includes two years of extensive water quality testing, environmental impact research, river depth and floor quality testing.

Fitness Passport

Council has created and launched the new all-encompassing Fitness Passport to make it easy for residents to use our active facilities and services. The Passport gives unlimited access to our five aquatic centres, three gyms and 250 group fitness classes. Our recreation classes have also expanded to include six free, weekly post-natal Pilates classes, Zumba Gold for older people and Women's Dance Fit.



Leichhardt Skate Park



Active Inner West portal

The Active Inner West portal promotes and delivers 350 different aquatic, sport and recreational offerings across the LGA to help our residents discover everything on offer at their fingertips. The portal is a one-stop visual guide to the sport and recreation activities of the Inner West. Over 100 different sporting clubs, using 29 sports grounds and two recreation centres across 31 different sports are featured on the portal.

Aquatic centres

Our five aquatic centres attract over 2 million visitors per year representing some of the most industry leading facilities of their type in Australia. Collectively they promote a wide variety of sports, active recreation and healthy living. Visitor safety is assured as we consistently deliver high levels of aquatic supervision across all our aquatic centres. This is reflected in Council achieving the Royal Life Saving NSW 5-star Water Safety Partners rating under their Aquatic Facility Safety Assessment.

Recreation Strategy

Council's Recreation Strategy was adopted in October 2023 and it provides the strategic direction for providing and enhancing recreation and open spaces within the Inner West over the next ten years. The strategy has three themes – an Active Inner West, Active Lives, and Active Neighbourhoods.

Leichhardt Oval upgrade

A joint funding arrangement between the Federal Government (\$20M), Inner West Council (\$10M) and the NSW Government (\$10M) has been secured to upgrade Leichhardt Oval. Over 370 local residents, spectators and athletes contributed to planning the Master Plan which will guide Council's upgrade. It seeks to preserve and protect the heritage of the ground, including the Wayne Pearce Hill and Keith Barnes Stand, while providing the modern seating and facilities the ground desperately needs.



Henson Park, Marrickville

Council's vision for Henson Park to become the home ground of the Sydney Swans women's team and home of the mighty Newtown Jets has been cemented in a 21-year agreement. This innovative project is being delivered as a Public Private Partnership with the AFL and Council with funding from Commonwealth and State Governments and in collaboration with the Newtown Jets. The plan existing King George V Memorial Grandstand will be upgraded and a new multi-purpose building constructed alongside it.

RH Mahoney Memorial Park

RH Mahoney Memorial Park was upgraded in 2023 with the assistance of a NSW Government grant under the Female Friendly Sporting Facilities program and the Australian Football Facilities Fund. The upgrades totalling \$2.3M support men's and women's AFL and the Sydney Women's Baseball League. Local schools also use the grounds for sporting activities and these upgrades are a welcome addition to the sporting community.

King George Park, Rozelle

King George Park is one of the Inner West's most popular sporting grounds with thousands of locals using the park through organised soccer, rugby league or little athletics. Council regraded the sports fields, installed new sub-surface drainage and new turf, upgraded the lighting to LEDs, improved and refurbished the park seating and substantially upgraded the long jump. The works also included upgrading the car park, ensuring the pathways are accessible and undertaking tree and garden planting to provide shade and habitat for wildlife.

Inclusive playgrounds

In September 2024, Council officially opened the new King George Park Inclusive Playground, the first of five flagship inclusive playgrounds that Council will deliver across the Inner West. With extensive feedback from locals and inclusive play experts at Touched by Olivia Foundation, this high-quality, fully inclusive playground allows all children to experience the joys and benefits of play together.

Inclusive playgrounds are vital to our community as they provide a space that is accessible to not only children but people of all ages and abilities. These playgrounds also offer a happy and safe space for children where difference is not a factor, and a range of play types are catered to with areas for stimulation, quiet time and socialisation.

Council invested in and delivered this \$2.9M project, with the State Government contributing \$156,000 toward the total project cost through a Crown Reserves Improvement Fund grant.

Playground upgrades

Council has an ongoing program to maintain and upgrade playgrounds across the Inner West. In this term playgrounds that Council upgraded include:

- Cahill Street Reserve in Annandale
- Gladstone Park in Balmain
- Lion Street Playground in Croydon
- Rowe playground in Dulwich Hill
- Algie Park playground in Haberfield

- Pioneers Memorial Park, Lambert Park, North Street, War Memorial Park and Wangal Nura Park playgrounds in Leichhardt
- Maundrell Park at Petersham
- Darrell Jackson Gardens, John Paton Reserve, Rose Street and Kensington Road playgrounds in Summer Hill
- Kendrick Park playground in Tempe

A new playground was also delivered in Lewis Herman Reserve, Ashfield.

New dementia friendly public park

The Lewis Herman Reserve in Ashfield is a new all ages recreation space and is the first dementia-friendly park in NSW. The community and Council worked together on achieving a park where 'everyone can play'. The new park is not only inclusive and responsive to the needs of both current and future users, but also meets intergenerational recreational needs.



Kendrick Park Playground

People have access to the services and facilities they need at all stages of life and abilities

Early learning and care

The 17 early learning and care services that Council operates makes it one of the largest local government early childhood education providers across Australia. Council aims to provide excellent local early learning services to the local community. The most recent survey (2022) achieved 92.8% parent satisfaction rating across all the services.

In January 2022, the Globe Preschool, located at Wilkins Public School in Marrickville re-opened its doors in new purpose-built premises. By June 2023, it had attained an Exceeding rating across all elements of the Australian Quality Education Standard, which less than 10% of all early learning centres achieve. Over half of Council's services have achieved Exceeding ratings in the National Quality Standard, including the recently opened Yirran Gumal at Marrickville.

Libraries

Council's eight libraries are significant community meeting places with over one million visitors each year. The libraries delivered services to over 2.5M users including more than 1,900 carefully curated programs, access to digital and physical collections and provision of free wifi and public computers in the Council term.

Programs included author talks, schools' engagement and technology classes. A growing collection of histories, podcasts and videos capture the stories of people who have lived and worked in the area and have a deep connection giving the community access to immediate lived history. There has been an expansion in the robotics collection, musical instrument library at Ashfield which features instruments from around the world and digital e-collections. Council

developed learning resources, including the Marrickville Metro Site Study to promote local heritage. The National Trust recognised this project, awarding it Highly Commended in the Education and Interpretation category of the 2023 Heritage Awards.

The heritage Balmain Library and Town Hall was refurbished, delivering a more contemporary space with areas for quiet and group study and places to meet. The library reopened in August 2024.

Youth Week

In 2023 Council won the Local Government Award for Youth Week – Most Inclusive Program for its Queer Prom. This event was held for 12-18 year old LGBTQ+ people and allies from across the Inner West. It provided a safe and fun way for Inner West young people to celebrate and connect with fellow members of the Rainbow community. Council provided free entry and complimentary transport home within the Inner West.

Free period products

In a NSW first, Council has made period products free at pools and other community locations. In 2023, Council installed 10 contactless vending machines dispensing free pads and tampons at sites in Ashfield, Marrickville, Leichhardt and Balmain including swimming pools, libraries and a youth centre.

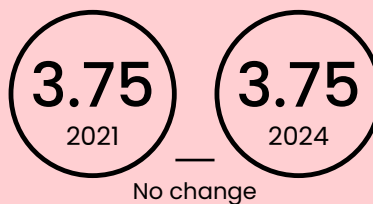


Strategic Direction 5: Progressive responsive and effective civic leadership

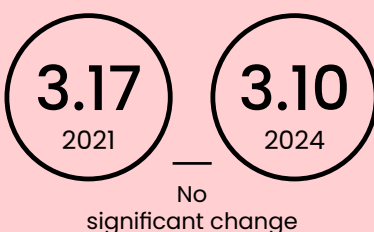
Overall community satisfaction with Council
Mean ratings out of 5



Community rating of Council's community engagement
Mean ratings out of 5



Community satisfaction with Council's integrity and decision-making
Mean ratings out of 5



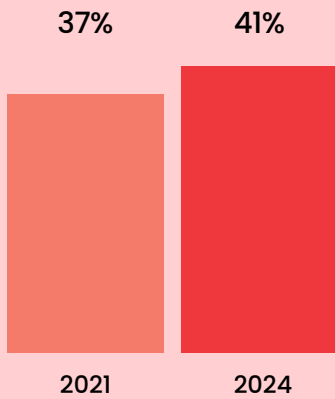
Community satisfaction with Council contact
Mean ratings out of 5



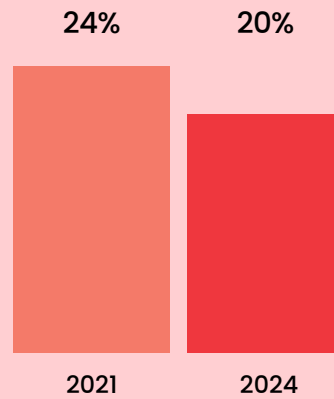
87%

of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council.

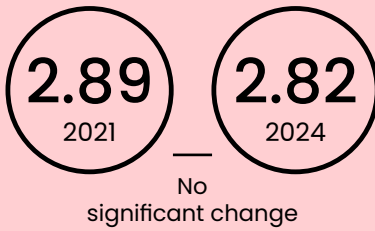
Residents who agree that they have enough opportunities to participate in Council's community consultation



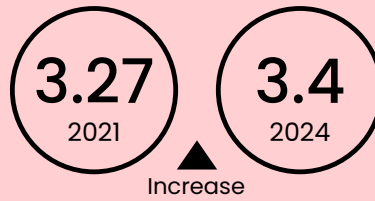
Residents who agree that Council manages its finances well



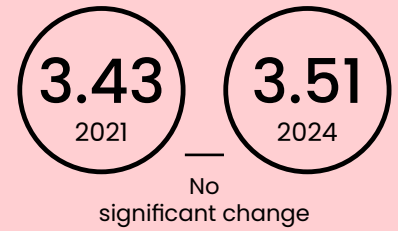
Satisfaction with community's ability to influence Council's decision making
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with provision of Council information to the community
Mean ratings out of 5



Satisfaction with support and programs for volunteers and community groups
Mean ratings out of 5



Achievements – Progressive, responsive and effective civic leadership

Council is responsive and service focused

Recognising excellence

In November 2023, Council was awarded the prestigious AR Bluett Memorial Award. Since 1945, this annual award has acknowledged outstanding achievements in local government and is the greatest accolade that a local council can achieve.

On issuing the award, Chairman of the judging panel, Les McMahon said:

“Inner West Council had forged three previous inner west councils into a vibrant, responsive and community focused organisation. Customer experiences have outperformed against other like sized councils. Environmental leadership is paramount to the success of the council, being the first council to be powered with 100% renewable energy and be 100% divested from fossil fuels. Inner West Council had also delivered \$22 million in savings since amalgamation.”

In 2023, Council was awarded the Australian Business Employer of Choice Award. This Award recognizes organisations that develop leading workplaces that maximise the full potential of their workforce through established policies and practices.

Customer service improvements

Improving customer experience has been a high priority for Council and practical steps have been taken to deliver excellent customer service. The Customer Service Charter was launched in June 2023 following extensive consultation to develop service standards that the community can expect when interacting with Council. Over 400 staff have completed a customer service writing program to improve their written interactions with residents. The Customer Service Charter has been shared with all staff to ensure its promise is met and it is continuously promoted via Council’s communication channels.

Weekly mobile customer service stalls have proven very popular with residents. These are held in key locations across all suburbs of the Inner West to facilitate easy interactions between residents and Council. In the most recent Community Satisfaction Survey, 81% of residents who had contacted Council in the last year were satisfied with the way their contact was handled, up 7% from 2021.

Inner West website

The Inner West Council website has been improved with simplified navigation to make it easier for residents to log requests for information and make online payments. Innovations for work order processes and streamlining the management of infrastructure related requests such as civil works have been introduced successfully.

Parking permit application processes have been simplified along with supplying instructions on the process and requirements for parking permits. Back-office processing of electronic emails, applications, payments and forms have a 100% response rate within the target range of five business days.

Gender Equity Strategy

Inner West is one of only two Councils in NSW to develop a gender equity strategy. A key Gender Equity Strategy action has been to produce a video showcasing Women in STEM and non-traditional roles. The video aims to challenge gender stereotypes, encourage gender diversity and the diversity of roles that Council has available while showcasing the Inner West Council as a great place to work.

Council Staff





Council makes responsible decisions to manage finite resources in the best interest of current and future communities

People are well informed and actively engaged in local decision making and problem solving

Financial sustainability

Council has continued to work toward our strategic priority of financial sustainability. Following significant financial, technical and legal due diligence, Council acquired two properties outside the LGA. These two properties will provide a combined annual return of \$4.695M. The Land and Property Strategy is now being reviewed with a new Property Strategy under development. This will guide future planning and management of the property portfolio.

Council remains focused on identifying opportunities to deliver additional revenue to ensure we achieve financial surpluses in the coming years, while delivering high quality services and facilities to meet community needs. See the Finance section of this report for further detail.

Community engagement

Council's community engagement provides opportunities for the Inner West's broad and diverse community to participate in and influence Council decision making and activities. People who rated Council's community engagement as 'good to excellent' increased from 60% to 65% from 2021 to 2024.

The community has the opportunity to engage with Council through both digital and in-person methods. Since July 2022 when Council's Your Say Inner West engagement website moved to a new platform, there have been nearly 400,000 views and over 17,000 contributions to engagement projects.

Council held 21 Local Matters forums across the Inner West where ward councillors and the Executive staff listened to the community's ideas and concerns about how their local area can be improved and presented projects of local interest.

In August 2024, Council held an innovative deliberative forum which brought together a 'mini-public' of 100 residents to inform the review of the Community Strategic Plan and Community Engagement Strategy. The residents were randomly recruited and representative of the Inner West demographic.

Local Democracy Groups

Members of the Inner West community joined Council's Local Democracy Groups which provide ongoing advice and input to support Council's decision making and actions. They support Council to implement the Community Strategic Plan through the actions outlined in Council's Delivery Program and Annual Operational Plan and provide a range of input into topical issues. There are 13 Local Democracy Groups aligned to the term of the elected Council.

Communication

Council continued to communicate with the Inner West community through a range of ways including print, digital and through the media. The most recent Community Satisfaction Survey showed that the most common ways that people receive information about Council is through a flyer/letter from Council to their home (90%), word of mouth (74%), the monthly printed newsletter Inner West News (64%), Council's website (61%), notices/posters (56%) and through Libraries (54%). People aged 25-34 were more likely to receive information through social media than all other age groups.



Local Democracy Groups meet at Ashfield Town Hall

Partnerships and collaboration are valued and recognised as vital for community leadership and making positive changes

Advocacy for emerging community issues

Council successfully fought to keep local planning controls rather than having State Government-led rezonings imposed on our community. Strong advocacy against unacceptable impacts from State projects such as the Rozelle Interchange and asbestos in Rozelle Parklands featured during this term.

Council followed up the successful #racismnotwelcome street sign campaign with the development of an Anti-Racism Strategy, adopted in September 2024 following extensive community input – a NSW council first.

Council strongly advocated for affordable housing and renters' rights including offering council-owned car parks and depots for conversion to public housing by the State Government.

Uluru Statement from the Heart

To build recognition and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council undertook a unique initiative to promote and build community awareness of the Uluru Statement From The Heart. The project was created collaboratively with Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. Its aim was for citizens to be able to take practical steps towards reconciliation and educate the wider community about the crucial importance of building civic leadership at the grass roots level.

Council recruited over 1,100 volunteers for the project, engaged Youth Off the Streets to deliver their Walking Together training package, and ran train-the-trainer sessions for interested volunteers. As a result of the training, more than 10,000 conversations occurred and 160 people participated in the train-the-trainer community

of practice. They shared insights and practice on what works communicating with groups of people in workplaces, schools, clubs and voluntary associations.

Council hosted a Voice to Parliament BBQ in February 2023 to bring the community together. Local churches, schools, sports clubs and ethnic community organisations all supported the BBQ. Over 1,000 community members attended the event at Petersham Park with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Linda Burney, then Minister for Indigenous Australians and Aunty Pat Anderson, co-author of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Mayor Darcy Byrne and Inner West Councillors.

Leading the way in sustainable procurement

Council participated in the Sustainable Choice performance comparison, which measures our performance against the elements of ISO 20400. While Council's progress against ISO 20400 is currently assessed as being at an Intermediate level, which just fell short of an Advanced rating, our score was double the council average with further improvements underway.

Council adopted the Procurement Strategy in May 2024, which has a compulsory 15% weighting for Ethical, Environmental, Local, Social, Indigenous (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander) procurement.

Building community capacity through Council's grants program

Council provides grants to community groups for projects that enrich the Inner West across a range of social, cultural, environmental and economic areas. In the last three years, Council has invested over \$2M in building community capacity through grants and contributions.

- In 2021/22, Council awarded \$937,000 in grants to individuals and community groups, including special COVID-19 grants.
- In 2022/23, Council awarded \$458,000 in grants to individuals and community groups.
- In 2023/24, Council awarded \$638,000 in grants to individuals and community groups.



Financial performance

Objective

Council's overall guiding principle is to maintain a strong and sustainable financial position, underpinned by a sound income base and commitment to financial control to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services, facilities and infrastructure required by the community.

Council's current financial position

Council's financial position remains strong with cash and investments totaling \$259.8 million against total liabilities of \$157.1 million.

Our income comes from rates on properties, user fees and charges, government grants, interest on investments, leasing of properties and other sources. This includes the purchase of two investment properties that assisted Council in funding operations from the net income received. Expenditure includes wages, construction, maintenance, materials, grants provided to community groups, and other services to the community such as Council libraries and aquatic centres.

Council manages circa \$2.9 billion of infrastructure assets that includes parks, roads, bridges, community and recreation facilities, drains, property, plant and equipment. In the 2021-2024 of Council, it was the first time since Council amalgamated that all assets were revalued, and condition assessments determined. This will assist in Council planning for the renewal of assets in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Challenges for Council include increasing demand and levels of services, facilities and infrastructure from the community with restricted Council revenue, along with rising costs and supply chain issues.

Council has undertaken significant work to improve on its Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure that it is financially sustainable moving forward while not impacting on Council's operations or services provided to the community. From 2025/26 financial year, Council is projected to have surpluses moving forward in the next nine years of the Long-Term Financial Plan.



Operating results in the last 3 years before capital grants and contributions

In 2021/22, Council achieved an operating surplus of \$20.0 million, including capital grants and contributions. The operating result before capital grants and contributions was a deficit of \$10.8 million. The budget deficit was primarily due to further COVID-19 related Public Health Order restrictions and lockdowns, which subsequently occurred from late June 2021.

In 2022/23, Council achieved an operating surplus of \$22.7 million, including capital grants and contributions. The operating result before capital grants and contributions was a deficit of \$6.5 million. The budget deficit was primarily due to an increase in expenditure associated with:

- Additional maintenance being undertaken on Council buildings to ensure our facilities remain fit-for-purpose for community use
- Grants which were initially classified as capital budget and but were ultimately used for operational purposes resulted in a reclassification of expenditure
- A comprehensive asset revaluation process resulted in a higher write-off of assets than was budgeted

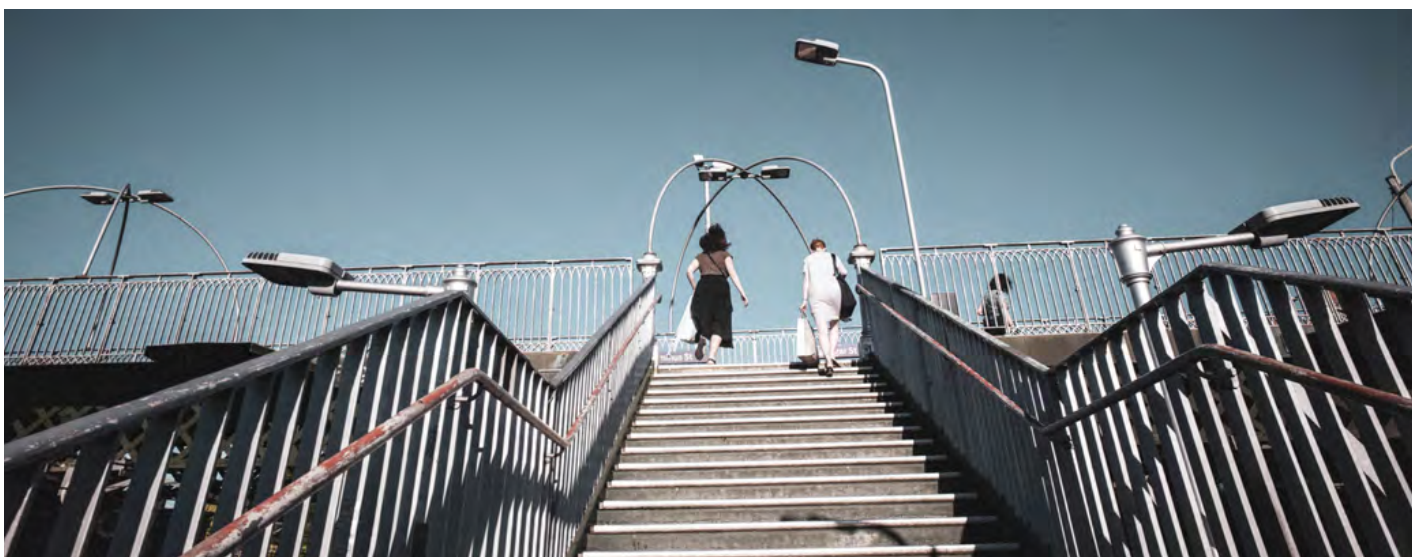
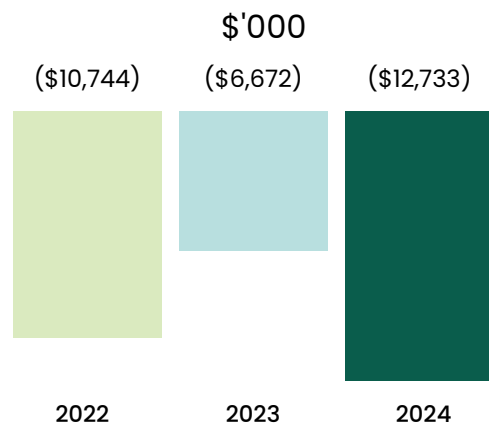
Although the 2022/23 financial year resulted in an operational deficit, Council is working towards achieving surpluses each year in our Long-Term Financial Plan.

In 2023/24, Council achieved an operating surplus of \$12.3 million including capital grants and contributions. The operating result before capital grants and contributions was a deficit of \$12.7 million.

The budget deficit was primarily due to an increase in expenditure for:

- Fair value adjustment to Council’s Liverpool investment property of \$4.9 million
- Disposal of assets greater than budget of \$5.2 million
- Depreciation expenses mostly due to revaluations of Council’s assets of \$2.0 million.

The first two variances are non-cash adjustments and have no impact on Council’s reserves, where the third variance allows Council to increase the Depreciation Reserve set aside to complete renewal works on Council’s assets.



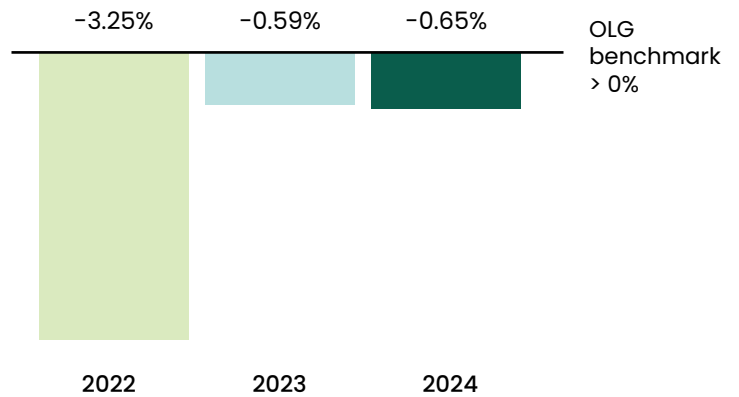
Achieved performance measures and benchmarks

Council achieved four of the six performance measures and benchmarks between 2022-2024, the exceptions being operating performance and outstanding rates and charges.

The following section provides an overview of Council's performance against the performance measures and performance benchmarks set by the Office of Local Government (OLG).

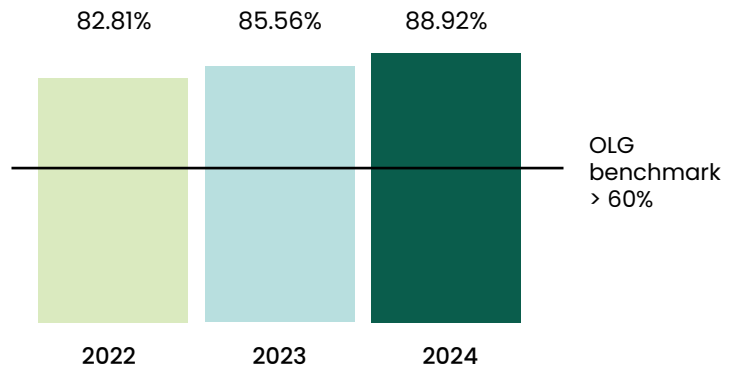
1. Operating performance ratio

This ratio measures Council's achievement of containing operating expenditure within operating revenue. 2022 ratio was impacted from the COVID-19 Public Health Order restrictions and lockdowns in June 2021 and improved to almost meet OLG benchmarks the final two years. Future years are moving towards meeting OLG benchmarks.



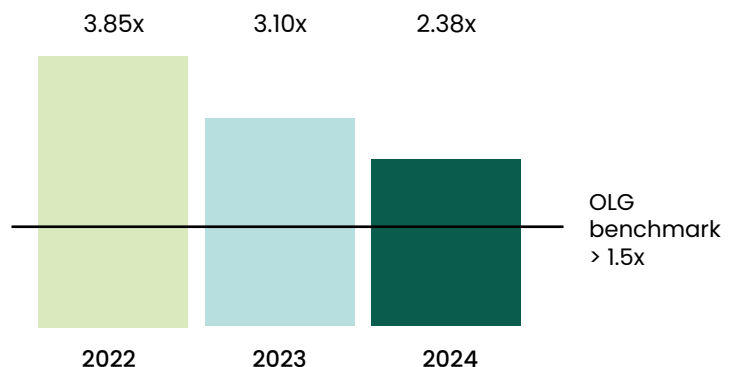
2. Own source operating revenue ratio

This ratio measures fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. The ratio has improved each year and is positioned above the OLG benchmark.



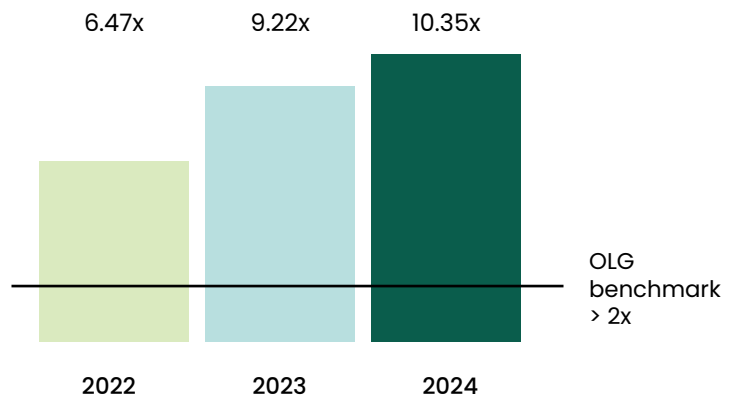
3. Unrestricted current ratio

This ratio assesses the adequacy of working capital and its ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council. The ratio has reduced over the three years due to Council's acquisition of investment properties in 2023 and 2024.



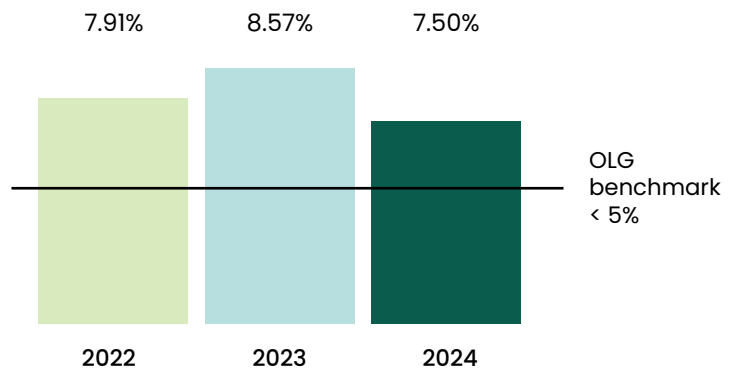
4. Debt service cover ratio

This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal, and lease payments. The ratio over the three years grows and is significantly above the benchmark, demonstrating Council's ability to service its debt.



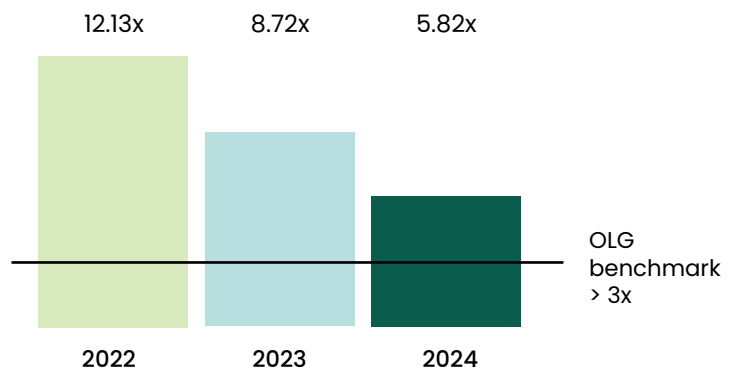
5. Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

This ratio assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity and the adequacy of recovery efforts. Council did not actively complete debt recovery of rates and annual charges due to the COVID-19 pandemic until late in the 2023 financial year, as shown in the improvement in 2024.



6. Cash expense cover ratio

This ratio assesses the adequacy of working capital and its ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council. The ratio has reduced over the three years due to Council's acquisition of investment properties in 2023 and 2024.





Next Steps – where we are headed and future challenges



Strategic Direction 1: An ecologically sustainable Inner West

Where we are headed

We need to continue to protect our environment and adapt to a changing climate. Council is working towards achieving an ecologically sustainable Inner West in the term including through encouraging electric vehicles, installing EV charging and continuing to roll-out our Fleet Transition Plan. Council will also review the Climate and Renewables Strategy, progress the second stage of the Climate Adaptation Plan and roll out the Gas Transition Plan.

There is also a need to embed food recycling (FOGO) to increase participation and recovery of organics and support the community to live sustainability including through Council's sustainability programs and the Inner West Sustainability Hub.

The Inner West community has expressed a keen desire for more river swimming sites, and in this term, Council will focus on progressing the proposed swim site at Callan Park and preparing for the Mort Bay swim site. Council will implement the Biodiversity Strategy and develop an Urban Forest Strategy to protect and enhance tree canopy.

Future challenges

Adapting to our changing climate and achieving net zero carbon community before 2050 is a key challenge for the community. Future challenges of managing climate change risks include uncertainty about the precise nature and timing of climatic changes, particularly at regional and local scales, uncertainty regarding societal, economic, and technological changes that may influence global emissions over time, and long-term horizons that may not align to other planning timeframes.

Pressure from development including the need to plan for future population growth through increased housing supply and major infrastructure projects creates challenges for protecting and increasing local biodiversity and increasing tree canopy. Investment is required to continue the rollout of solar and electric vehicles and to prepare for a transition away from gas.

Supporting the Inner West community to work towards a "circular economy" where waste is recognised as a resource is another key challenge.



Strategic Direction 2: Liveable, connected neighbourhoods and transport

Where we are headed

We need housing and infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population. And we continue to move towards a future with less reliance on private motor vehicle use and more sustainable active and public transport.

Council is investigating the impact of the proposed housing reform measures on existing transport hubs and impact on heritage areas as part of the State Government's Transport Oriented Development and Low to Medium Rise reforms. The State Government has set an increased target of 7,800 dwellings by 2029 in the Inner West.

Council has received a Federal Government grant of \$2.6M to investigate and master plan areas in the Inner West where there may be future housing potential to reach dwelling targets.

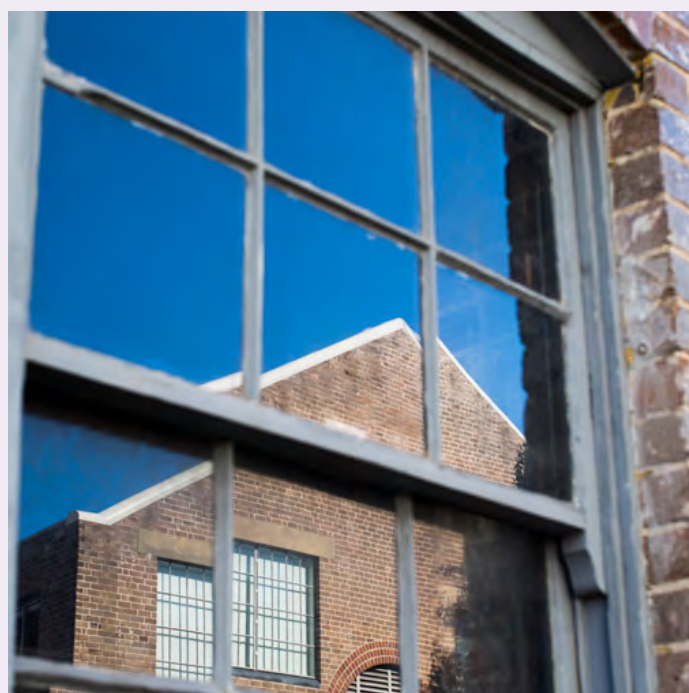
In this term Council will deliver the Cooks to Cove GreenWay and Pyrmont Bridge Road Cycleway, implement the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan and build more bike paths and cycling infrastructure in accordance with the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan. Council will also refresh the Integrated Transport Strategy, prepare a Parking Strategy and continue our strong advocacy to the State Government on public transport provision.

Future challenges

Housing and associated infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population is a key future challenge, particularly identifying where future housing can be located in an already densely populated Inner West. Provision of affordable housing for key workers and low-income households is essential to achieving an equitable society where everyone has a suitable place to live.

Challenges include potential and future high rise developments that may conflict with existing local area character, existing housing styles and heritage and impacts on transport, the environment, trees and biodiversity, and flooding and safety risks.

Future challenges include transport issues around the M4 tunnel locations at Rozelle and Balmain and impacts of the rollout of new metro stations while catering for bus transitions during construction.





Strategic Direction 3: Creative communities and a strong economy

Where we are headed

Population growth will drive the local economy with increasing need for local services, entertainment and hospitality, but also put pressure on spaces for economic and cultural activity.

Council will continue to deliver the Main Streets Strategy, create town centre master plans, finalise the Economic Development Strategy using the principles of community wealth building and partner with local business and industry on initiatives to improve the local economy. Having delivered NSW's first special entertainment precinct in Enmore Road during the previous term, Council will progress additional precincts.

The Inner West community values diversity which Council will continue to celebrate through local events delivered in partnership with a diverse array of local and creative businesses. There is a strong sense of Aboriginal culture that will continue to be channelled in event programs, together with our highly creative and literary community, creative industries, artists, and community stakeholders.

Cultural enlivenment will bring a new appreciation of the Inner West's local streets, neighbourhoods and suburbs. Council will scope new opportunities and community partnerships to co-design, improve and strengthen the Inner West's cultural offerings. Just some of the cultural initiatives Council will deliver in the term include opening our town halls to creative uses, continuation of the Perfect Match street arts program, annual Young Creatives Awards Program, and new creative commissions and activations through the EDGE program.

Future challenges

Challenges include striking the right balance between promoting and supporting a vibrant night time economy and maintaining neighbourhood amenity including noise levels, through the special entertainment precincts.

Retention of industrial land is a key challenge given pressures to provide new housing, land costs and infrastructure demands, particularly in the Marrickville, Camperdown, Leichhardt and St Peters areas. Availability of affordable places and spaces for creatives and other small businesses seeking to establish themselves is a challenge as pressure on development continues.

The changing global economy, rising costs and supply chain issues all impact the local Inner West economy. Council will continue to advocate to improve local economic and employment conditions that stimulate and support the growth of local businesses.



Strategic Direction 4: Healthy, resilient and caring communities

Where we are headed

Council will continue to provide opportunities for the community to participate in recreation and exercise to embrace an active and healthy lifestyle. The upgrade of Leichhardt Park and Oval, and finalisation of the Cooks to Cove GreenWay are two major projects for the term.

Council will implement the Anti-Racism Strategy, partner with Twenty10 for the ongoing operation of the Inner West Pride Centre, finalise and implement the Community Safety Action Plan and deliver inclusive playgrounds in all wards of the Inner West so that everyone can play.

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council will establish the Aboriginal Community Hub at Tempe and deliver Aboriginal Survival Memorials, with the second Memorial planned for Illoura Reserve, East Balmain in 2025.

Delivering high quality early learning and children's services will continue to be a priority over the next term, including exceeding the National Quality Standards. Council will continue to deliver excellent library and history services and plan for the needs of new communities including in the Bays Precinct.

Future challenges

Responding to and resourcing the evolving social, recreational and health needs of the community are the key challenges for the future. Building a more inclusive Inner West where everyone can participate is a key focus for the community, as is addressing racism, supporting social cohesion, and working on Reconciliation and greater justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Supporting our youngest citizens to have the best start possible and providing services as the population ages will continue to be challenges for service delivery including the need to adapt to suit diverse and changing community needs.

Ensuring equitable and balanced access to passive and active recreational spaces is a challenge as the population increases, in an increasingly dense urban environment.



Leichhardt Skate Park



Strategic Direction 5: Progressive, responsive and effective civic leadership

Where we are headed

Council is committed to providing effective civic leadership through improved customer service, good governance and financial sustainability in the long term. Council will communicate effectively and provide opportunities for the community to influence Council's decision making and activities through transparent community engagement.

Continued delivery of our Customer Experience Strategy will improve digital transactions while maintaining face to face and responsive customer services in and around the Inner West.

Council will continue strengthening our financial and budget management, maximising strategic procurement, implementing the Australian Business Excellence Framework, strategically planning for the future, enhancing asset management practices, implementing our Land and Property Strategy and leveraging technology. Together, these will deliver better community outcomes, engagement, services, processes and efficiency improvements.

Future challenges

Citizens expect seamless digital experiences and easy transactions enabled by technological advances. Adapting to changing technology including harnessing new AI technologies and addressing the need for increased cybersecurity is a challenge for the future.

Meeting community expectations in an environment of increasing costs and budget constraints is a challenge for all levels of government, that Council will address through financial sustainability measures and more efficient ways of working including productivity improvements and service reviews.

Building a resilient community is a key challenge for the future. Community resilience is central to being prepared for the chronic stresses and acute shocks that the Inner West is likely to face in the future. Acute shocks are sudden events such as heatwaves, floods and cyberattacks while chronic stresses are day to day challenges such as rising inequity, family violence and cost of living. Partnering with other levels of government, stakeholders and community will be essential to solve problems and address emerging needs.



THE ULURU STATEMENT

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

WELCOME EVERYONE! WELCOME!

VOICE, TREATY, TRUTH

FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE AND ALL AUSTRALIANS

WE ARE ALL PART OF A COMMUNITY

TRUTH TALKING

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

CONCERNED SOCIETY

Hon
Minister
CONCERNED SOCIETY

Community Languages

Talk free with an interpreter call 131 450

Chinese Simplified	我们说普通话。如需免费传译服务，请致电131 450，然后请传译员致电02 9392 5000 接通 Inner West 市政府。
Traditional Chinese	我們能說您的語言。如需免費傳譯服務，請致電131 450，然後請傳譯員致電02 9392 5000 接通 Inner West 市政府。
Greek	Μιλάμε τη γλώσσα σας. Για να μιλήσετε δωρεάν σε διερμηνέα καλέστε το 131 450. Ζητήστε τους να καλέσουν το Δήμο Inner West Council στο 02 9392 5000.
Italian	Parliamo la vostra lingua. Per parlare gratuitamente con un interprete chiamate il numero 131 450. Chiedetegli di chiamare il Comune di Inner West al numero 02 9392 5000.
Vietnamese	Chúng tôi nói ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Muốn nói chuyện có thông dịch viên miễn phí, hãy gọi số 131 450. Yêu cầu họ gọi cho Hội đồng Thành phố Inner West qua số 02 9392 5000.