

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW councils buy back recycling to drive new era in sustainable roads

16 Sydney metropolitan councils have joined forces to recycle nearly 100 million glass containers per year into local roads through the largest local government-led procurement of recycled road-making materials in NSW history.

A request for tender (RFT) released last week by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) on behalf of 16 councils representing over 2.1 million people aims to initiate a new age of road-making by using recycled crushed glass (RCG) as a substitute for natural sand in roads and footpaths in line with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and AUS-SPEC specifications.

The initiative, *Paving the Way*, is expected to create a market for over 20,000 tonnes of glass per year, or approximately one-third of these councils' household glass recycling collections, without compromising existing recycling of glass into beverage containers. By signalling ongoing aggregated demand to the market, SSROC aims to stimulate end markets for recycled glass, as well as support local jobs and the development of essential recycling infrastructure.

The use of RCG is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding the transport of virgin sand from distant quarries. The procurement's innovative contract model will track emissions and volumes of recycled materials to help councils report on sustainability targets.

Paving the Way is the first project under the Procure Recycled memorandum of understanding (MoU), signed by SSROC councils in November 2019, to prioritise recycled materials in procurement in response to China's National Sword policy, which barred imports of Australia's recyclable materials, and the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) decision to ban exports of unprocessed recyclable materials. Since then, SSROC has worked closely with TfNSW, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to refine specifications and align policies on recycled civil works materials.

Procure Recycled will identify more council procurement opportunities for other materials from kerbside recycling, including products made from recycled plastics such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene and expanded polystyrene.

NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean said the initiative is an important step for NSW by helping to increase the uptake in the use of recycled materials and also boosting local economies.

"I want to make sure that NSW is a leader when it comes to recycling waste and maximising recycling, this is not just an environmental strategy but an economic one as well," Mr Kean said.

"This is about the NSW Government empowering business and local government through innovative and sustainable initiatives that helps to build essential infrastructure, creating jobs and driving a robust economy."

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said this initiative is a great example of local councils working with each other and the State Government to achieve significant economic, environmental and community benefits.

"Not only is this initiative set to deliver community infrastructure, it will also help protect the environment and create local jobs and economic activity," Mrs Hancock said.

SSROC President, Councillor John Faker, said, "This is a game-changer that puts every household on the frontline of a stronger, more sustainable society and reinforces the critical role played by the community in

separating their recycling. Our councils are working hard to ensure that every single recyclable material put into the yellow-lidded bin is used as a resource.”

SSROC Acting General Manager Helen Sloan says, “Local governments, especially when working collaboratively and buying wisely, can support growing and new markets and therefore the industries and jobs that result, so that everyone wins. *Paving the Way* is a great model for the future, and we welcome other councils to join the resulting contract.”

Participating councils include Bayside, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, City of Sydney, Fairfield, Georges River, Hornsby, Inner West, Northern Beaches, Randwick, Ryde, Sutherland, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra.

SSROC:

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of 11 councils spanning Sydney’s southern, eastern and inner west suburbs, as well as the Sydney CBD, covering a third of the Greater Sydney’s population, or 1.7 million people.

SSROC provides a forum through which member councils can interact, exchange ideas and work collaboratively to solve regional issues and contribute to the future sustainability of the region, being inclusive outside of the SSROC membership. SSROC advocates on the behalf of our region to ensure that the major issues are addressed by all levels of government.

<https://ssroc.nsw.gov.au/>

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