



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sydney Mayors meet to discuss growing waste challenges

Mayors and Deputy Mayors from across Sydney were joined by key stakeholders to bring attention to the growing waste challenges facing the Sydney metropolitan area in a summit at Sydney's Town Hall on Thursday 18 May.

Led by Resilient Sydney and organised by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC), the Summit also had the support of the Western and Northern Regional Organisations of Councils, and the Western Parklands and Macarthur alliances of councils. The ABC TV's War on Waste host Craig Reucassel presided over the Summit, which included representatives from all 33 councils in metropolitan Sydney, the Commonwealth Government, NSW Environmental Protection Authority, Greater Cities Commission, and Local Government NSW. Attendees took a critical look at the role metropolitan councils play in waste management and explored the various pressures on Sydney's potential resource recovery future.

SSROC President and Mayor of Burwood, Cr John Faker, said the summit was a great opportunity to strengthen connections between metropolitan councils through identifying a shared challenge that required collective action for the benefit of the entire region.

"Collecting and managing waste has always been one of the basic functions of councils, but it is becoming much more complicated, and increasingly challenging, to deliver these services efficiently and effectively," Cr Faker said.

"For example, current landfill capacity for non-recyclable waste will be exhausted by 2038, so the time to act is now.

"The Summit gave local mayors and other key government representatives the opportunity to gather in one place and explore the reasons for that growing challenge, discuss the scale of the problem for each local area and across the city, while looking at solutions as to how we as councils can respond."

Some of the issues raised at the summit included the growing costs of waste management for local councils, the need to increase infrastructure capacity to meet growing demand and creating incentives for new players to enter the marketplace to drive innovation and develop secure, onshore markets.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, said the attendance at the summit was a strong indication that collective action was needed now to stave off a potential crisis in waste management.

"Across the Sydney metropolitan area, 55 per cent of household and commercial waste goes to landfill each year, resulting in loss of valuable resources, costing businesses and households more than \$750 million in waste levies each year," the Lord Mayor said.



“Reducing waste and its impact on the environment is one of the key actions councils can take to lower our emissions.

“The NSW Government must invest the revenue from our waste levy to help accelerate our transition to a circular economy, build the waste infrastructure we need, and educate our communities on how to reduce waste.

“The lack of competition in the waste management industry means that councils have a weak position in being able to negotiate prices for services with service providers. If we can encourage other players to enter the market, especially in key local areas of the city, then all councils will be in a stronger position to meet the growing challenges posed by waste management.”

SSROC CEO, Helen Sloan, said she was heartened by the response to the summit and was looking forward to working with the councils to meet the waste challenges.

“SSROC, like our colleagues in Councils and in Western, Northern and The Parks areas of Sydney, has been diligently working for many years to adapt to external and structural issues in the waste industry, and to prepare for the transition to a circular economy. In that time we have anticipated many of the challenges that are now becoming apparent,” Ms Sloan said.

“So now we need to respond collectively these challenges, and it is encouraging to see so many Sydney councils showing their commitment to addressing these issues, and to see the other levels of government participating. It gives me great hope that the challenges will be met.”

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an incorporated association of 12 local councils, originally established in 1986. SSROC provides a forum through which our member councils can interact, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively to solve regional issues and contribute to the future sustainability of the region. We advocate on behalf of our region to ensure that the major issues are addressed by all levels of government.

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