# FORUM OUTCOMES | Turn Down the Heat

WSROC, its member councils, the Local Health Districts and the Western Sydney University, hosted the Turn Down the Heat forum on 2 March 2017. The aim of the forum was to discuss a way forward to tackle Western Sydney's urban heat problem in a cross sectoral, collaborative and strategic manner.

The forum was attended by approximately 100 stakeholders from across Western Sydney and included specialists from across the health, infrastructure, planning, environment, community, university and private sectors. The below provides a brief overview of the outcomes of the forum.

## 1. Current actions /activities

Through a quick mapping exercise, more than 200 **urban heat actions/activities** were identified that are currently underway. Most of these actions occurred in the following categories:

- Urban greening and green infrastructure
- Strategy development
- Planning policy and processes
- Research
- Energy efficiency projects and products.

## 2. Main issues identified

Over 170 **urban heat issues** were identified as being important to the participants' organisations. The main issues / themes raised were:

- Lack of coordination across agencies and interests
- Lack of urban greening (green space, infrastructure, open space)
- Lack of political will and knowledge
- Community perception, lack of knowledge and cultural barriers
- Planning (legislation, but also developer roles and responsibilities)
- Transport behaviour and options
- Building design and materials (incl housing design, asphalt, etc)
- Lack of options, or evidence of strategies to overcome urban heat

The group **identified issues, barriers, enablers and opportunities** to addressing the issue – an overview is listed on the next page.

## 3. The initiative

The group indicated in principle agreement regarding the need to form a coalition to tackle urban heat in Western Sydney. **Key foundation principles for cross-sectoral collaboration** as identified by the group:

- Established, agreed and shared vision and clearly defined and agreed goals and objectives
- Wide stakeholder representation at decision making level with multi-disciplinary teams and group
- Establish processes and protocols for governance and decision making, including defined roles and responsibilities
- Shared commitment to action and remaining outcomes and solution focused
- Sharing learning, research, data with each other and benchmarking activities and outcomes

## Summary Issues Barriers, Enablers and Opportunities

| Issue | Barriers | Enablers | Opportunities |
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| Housing (incl design, rental, etc) | ▪ Personal aspiration for home ownership<br>▪ People prefer quantity over quality<br>▪ Speed of development<br>▪ Tenancy laws/rights<br>▪ Lack of government incentives<br>▪ High costs and lack of knowledge re materials choice and good design for tenants, owners, landlords and builders | ▪ Upgrading design standards/BASIX and greater enforcement of design standards<br>▪ Greater communication of house performance<br>▪ Exempt development (eg solar/insulation)<br>▪ Improve planning and decision-making process<br>▪ Stronger negotiation with developers<br>▪ Strong local policy development (private certification)<br>▪ Employ existing research/innovation and new research<br>▪ New normal of green housing, education of home owners<br>▪ Financial benefits, financial infrastructure, tax deductions | ▪ Change in building code and install 'urban heat star rating' for residential homes<br>▪ Government can assist by providing green infrastructure, retrofitting social housing, research re behavior, change DCPs to include stranger controls.<br>▪ Education of tenants and landlords<br>▪ Leverage research such as CSRIO's urban development laboratory/estate<br>▪ More central oversight and decrease private certifiers |
| Lack of political will | ▪ Complexity of issue<br>▪ Lack of awareness and education<br>▪ Often short-term mindset<br>▪ Risk of personal interest and/or conflict of interest | ▪ Make the subject personal and relevant to politicians<br>▪ Create regional leaders and strong leadership<br>▪ Use research and evidence<br>▪ Ensure grass roots community voice/s are being heard | ▪ Protect community value<br>▪ Embrace sustainable growth – improve environment and livability<br>▪ Work with professional groups – agree on outcomes, but provide incentives |
| Community perception and education | ▪ Lack of information and education, including from media and councils. Also at times misinformation.<br>▪ Community can feel powerless<br>▪ Lack of utilised research and shared knowledge of strategies to address heat stress<br>▪ Community diversity, including cultural diversity<br>▪ Time, finances and resources involved to plan<br>▪ Behavioural change required<br>▪ Money, motivating factor in community | ▪ Education/educators<br>▪ Build community capacity, empowerment and leadership<br>▪ Re-orientation public policy and regulation of controls (e.g. electricity controls)<br>▪ Better consultation and engagement<br>▪ Strategic approach short, medium and long term<br>▪ Community wide/business etc included in discussion – e.g. Community campaign (I love trees)<br>▪ Incentives<br>▪ Research – ensure easily to understand. Use research for better planning. | ▪ Educating developers and builders - "Making it cool" – educate re: options for building, better design and use of materials<br>▪ Work with small community groups, community/council social planners to develop strategic engagement strategy<br>▪ Media-mobilisation and education<br>▪ Needs assessment to identify extent of the issues<br>▪ Community education, including schools<br>▪ Regulation controls/incentives for strategies such as use of solar, planting trees<br>▪ Councils to help develop community leadership and initiatives, assist in project development<br>▪ Community issues made clear and directions from |

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| | priorities<br>▪ Seasonal importance<br>▪ Confidence and leadership in community groups | ▪ Capitalize on heat waves -> timely reminder of the need for mitigation<br>▪ Social media e.g. alerts, change campaigns | government to accommodate those community issues e.g. housing prices can be related to increase houses with trees<br>▪ Social research to delve into community wants/needs/behaviours<br>▪ Service providers to vulnerable communities and other networks –enable these groups to participate and influence<br>▪ Popularise mitigation eg "the block" episode on heat sensitive design |
| **Planning, materials and design** | ▪ Too many agencies (too many changes)<br>▪ Lack of governance framework<br>▪ Innovation versus costs<br>▪ Lack of political will and courage<br>▪ Lack of community understanding<br>▪ Sprawl mentality – density debate<br>▪ Urban density with minimal amenity or green space – lack of regulation<br>▪ Lack of ideas/regulation for innovation | ▪ Uniform Government = state<br>▪ Regulation and research = better practice and materials. E.g. Urban heat modelling different development scenarios (air and ground templates)<br>▪ Education, engagement and awareness around best practice and value<br>▪ Dedicated space for green infrastructure<br>▪ Requiring green space in planning controls<br>▪ Change to legislation<br>▪ Education of options available/and the reason to consider them<br>▪ Master planned approach to urban forum local government advocate for change<br>▪ An honest and informed debate on housing | ▪ Appropriate land use and design controls that priorities green space, infrastructure – statutory controls<br>▪ Research<br>▪ Provide education and awareness around value, materials and emerging technologies<br>▪ Strategic level/coordination to planning green infrastructure<br>▪ Urban heat modelling different development scenarios (air and ground templates)<br>▪ Draft district plan - current housing demand is an opportunity to construct neighbourhood and houses that are resilient and rethink where development should occur<br>▪ Current heat waves as opportunity to education and change attitudes<br>▪ Promoting working models – local and global |
| **Climate change mitigation** | ▪ Lack of funding<br>▪ Political uncertainty<br>▪ Lack of information on projects and best practice<br>▪ Costs associated with climate change mitigation<br>▪ Old technology getting in the way | ▪ Climate change is a hot issue<br>▪ Education system is looking at climate change a lot (at all levels) | ▪ Invest in local projects<br>▪ Leverage in local groups<br>▪ Incentivise good development<br>▪ Leverage new technology and falling prices |