

ORGANISING FOR THE COMMON GOOD SYDNEY ALLIANCE SUMMARY 2019

What is the Sydney Alliance?

“The Sydney Alliance brings together diverse community organisations, unions and religious organisations to advance the common good and achieve a fair, just and sustainable city. We do this by providing opportunities for people to have a say in decisions that affect them, their families and everyone working and living in Sydney.

The Sydney Alliance is a strictly non-party political organisation. The Alliance accepts no government funding to remain independent.

To achieve this vision the Sydney Alliance works to achieve three goals:

1. *Leadership development of individuals through community organising training*
2. *Strengthening partner organisations through development and connecting to other orgs*
3. *Taking collective action for the common good*

Partner Organisations are strengthened as they give their members the experience of reshaping society. In the process, individuals grow and develop as leaders, become full democratic citizens and learn to speak and act with others on their own behalf. We build grassroots power that respects the contribution and dignity of all people, based on our Agenda for the Common Good which arises from listening and discernment across the partner organisations.”

The Alliance continues to grow the network of organisations involved to ensure that it is geographically, ethnically, religiously, socially representative of Sydney.



Frequently Asked Questions

1) Who are the Sydney Alliance? (As of February 2019)

Arab Council Australia
Australian Union of Jewish Students
Australian National Imams Council
Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT
Brighton-Kogarah Uniting Church
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
Catholics in Coalition for Justice & Peace
Churches Housing Inc
Climate Action Network Australia
Community Migrant Resource Centre
Granville Boys High School
Jesuit Refugee Service
National Tertiary Education Union NSW
National Zakat Foundation
Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Northmead Uniting Church
NSW Council for Pacific Communities

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
Parramatta Mission
Pitt St Uniting Church
Rail, Tram and Bus Union
Settlement Services International
Shelter NSW
St Vincent de Paul Society of NSW
Shopfront Distributive Alliance NSW (SDA NSW)
Solar Citizens
Sydney Community Forum
Sydney Policy Lab
Tenants Union of NSW
Unions NSW
United Muslim Womens' Association
United Voice
Uniting
Uniting Church Synod of NSW-ACT

2) Can the Alliance work outside of Sydney?

By arrangement yes. A number of state-wide organisations ask Alliance organisers to provide training for their members beyond Sydney. There are networks of leaders in Canberra and Newcastle.

3) What are the current campaigns?

The current campaigns of the Sydney Alliance include:

Work/Life Balance – protecting Sundays and public holidays

Power – affordable and renewable power access for migrant and low income communities

Homes – Affordable and secure housing

Heart – How do we be a city that welcomes those seeking asylum and refuge?

More detail at: https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/our_campaigns



4) What has the Sydney Alliance won?

Each of the following achievements has a long story of organising work that has brought together the best in civil society, leveraging our cooperative power and working with allies inside government and the market sectors.

External Organising achievements	Internal Organising achievements
<p>Housing: Put “inclusionary zoning” for affordable housing on the map and secured commitment of 5-10%+ on all new private developments. (Announced 2017). 5 new councils admitted to “SEPP 70”.</p> <p>Secured affordable housing commitments in all new Landcom and Urban Growth precincts. (Announced 2017)</p>	<p>Housing: Moved the ALP, GRN and CDP policy on affordable housing and no-grounds eviction. (2016)</p> <p>Organised the largest, most diverse collective of civil society organisations (130) to work together on a joint platform on housing for the Greater Sydney Commission. (2016)</p>
<p>People Seeking Asylum: Worked with Christian Allies within the NSW Liberal Government to: Secured with AS Interagency, transport concession travel for asylum seekers (announced 2015)</p> <p>Worked with Christian Allies within the NSW Nationals to: Secure free access to TAFE for asylum seekers (2016), ironed out implementation barriers (Jan 2017).</p>	<p>People Seeking Asylum: Cross organisational action team with leadership from asylum seekers and refugees led the “Changing the Conversations program, (2014-2017) Over 5000 people have participated in a face-to-face encounter with an asylum seeker, through their institution sharing their story through a “Changing the Conversations” Table Talk. 70% in Sutherland, St George or Western Sydney. (As of 2017) Over 20 asylum seekers and 10 refugees trained in story-telling and participating in CTC actions. (As of 2017)</p>
<p>Work/Life Balance: Stayed 2 year introduction of (2014) of retail trading on Boxing Day by working with CDP and coordinating Anglican, Baptist, Catholic approaches.</p> <p>Significant amendments ensuring workers right to refuse work on public holidays (2016)</p>	<p>Work/Life Balance: Faith organisations took a united position on fairness in the economy for low-income families in relation to Penalty Rates. (2016)</p> <p>Unprecedented cooperation between civil society on retaining public holidays as ‘day of rest’. (2013-2017)</p>
<p>Transport Local wins on train station safety and accessibility in Western and Southern Sydney. (2012, 2013, 2015)</p> <p>Preservation of Opal Gold Concession levels (2015) for pensioners.</p>	<p>Transport: Integration of ‘Citizen standard’ for public transport access into Transport planning. 400:15:1 SCA2 (<i>Within 400m, 15 min frequency, 1 ticket, safe, clean, affordable & accessible</i>).</p>
Social Inclusion	Social Inclusion:

Implementation of Aboriginal apprentice program from the local community at **Harold Park Estate** in Glebe (2 apprentices) 2012.

Olive Ribbon – combined Abrahamic faith and secular commitment to common city / values.
Multicultural, interfaith and secular **responses** to key racist and anti-Semitic attacks.



Internal Achievements (As of July 2018)

Training: over 3000 participants trained through staff/volunteer led Foundations Training. Over 125 youth graduates of internship program.
Take up of “relational organising” as a model across NGO, environment, union and faith sectors.
Significant take up of “Organising Academy” model within partner orgs.
Over 1100 school students have participated in “**community organising and student leadership**” training across the Sydney Catholic Archdiocese, Broken Bay and Parramatta Diocese independent and systemic schools. 350 in NSW State schools.

Collaborative relationships:

A huge number of bilateral and multilateral relationships have sprung from the connections built in the Alliance as well as thousands of “internal wins” inside organisations thanks to Alliance training.

Collaborations such as Muslim and Jewish women’s kitchen, NSW Cancer Council & NSW Nurses & Midwives joint policy forums, Refugee Welcome Committees in Bankstown following Syrian intake, Combatting exclusive secularism by ensuring Christian voices part of major environment conferences and organisations, Inner West bus access campaign, Tamil refugee engagement project at Northmead etc.

Affordable & Renewable Power

Raised \$208k per year for 3 years to fund new work on affordable and renewable power in Western Sydney with a focus and organisers from diverse communities.

5) How do you measure success? the Sydney Alliance measures its success with five metrics.

- (1) Have we development new leaders?
- (2) Are our individual partner organisations stronger?
- (3) Is the Alliance more effective?
- (4) Have we made a tangible concrete difference to the lives of Sydneysiders and people in NSW?
- (5) Do everyday people have a greater voice?

6) What happens if partners disagree?

Firstly, procedurally every Sydney Alliance partner has the right to veto any activity that is **against** their interest. Culturally the practices and values repeated over time demonstrate that Alliance partners have strong relationships that mean that both open, frank dialogue is encouraged and partners listen carefully to the interests of each other. The result is that the issues and campaigns are not divisive. Secondly, each organisation decides on what projects it wants to put energy, resources and time into. Procedurally, the Sydney Alliance council commissions action teams, and partner organisations will commission/endorse their members to participate. Culturally, partners put time into what you want to work on, and not what your organisation has little interest in. Often organisations have different groups of people involved in different parts of the Alliance.

7) How is the Sydney Alliance funded and governed?

The Sydney Alliance is an NFP Company limited by guarantee, funded 85% by its partner organisations, the remainder from donations. It receives no state or federal government money and does not have a relationship with any political party. The Sydney Alliance is registered as a non-profit company limited by guarantee. It has a board of directors, consisting of eight organisational leaders elected by the Council, with two of each caucus (faith, community, union) and two at-large. The Sydney Alliance Council sets the political strategy, tactics and action for the coalition.

8) What are expected of a partner organisation if they were to join?

At its minimum, dues and participation at Sydney Alliance Council.

Given that priorities, approach and public action are decided at the quarterly meetings (and decisions made by those who turn up), having the right pair of representatives is important. Typically partner organisations find those who strike the balance of having the deep trust of the leadership of the organisation and have the passion and time to participate in the work of the Alliance. There are two representatives and many organisations chose a staff person and a stakeholder to go together.

Those organisations who's focus with the Alliance is primarily through training, organisational development and multilateral relationships (but not necessarily the four campaigns) find that the Council participation is a great way to stay connected, keep sharp and maintain a set of diverse relationships.

9) Does this commitment end up overwhelming the CEO/Executive staff?

The Sydney Alliance has a process for ensuring that responsibilities are spread beyond the very busy public leaders of community institutions; the culture of the Alliance is to only ask public leaders when really needed – e.g. high level politicians meetings, letter signings, significant annual ceremonies (unless of course they have a passion – in which case they are welcome to be as involved as their appetite leads them!)

10) Who are the Friends of the Sydney Alliance?

Friends are individual members of the Sydney Alliance who choose to make a regular monthly donation to the Sydney Alliance.

Individuals and voluntary associations are welcome to become members.
Funded organisations are invited to consider becoming partners.

Friends of the Sydney Alliance are entitled to the following member benefits:

- Receive the Across the Alliance weekly wrap up.
- The capacity to participate in any of the 2018-2019 Research Action Teams; *work/life balance, affordable & renewable energy, affordable & secure housing, People-Seeking-Asylum Team*
- Invitations to member only networking functions with leaders of the partner organisations
- An invitation to attend an Introductory Foundations (2 Day) Training course which explores why and how we are building the Sydney Alliance.
- Invitations to come and hear guest speakers from other countries share their experiences about community organising.

...while also knowing that you are providing valuable funds that will help build a stronger community voice in Sydney.

For more detail:

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