



Becoming climate ready in social housing: learning to live with the heat



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Acknowledgement of Country

Windsor/Richmond

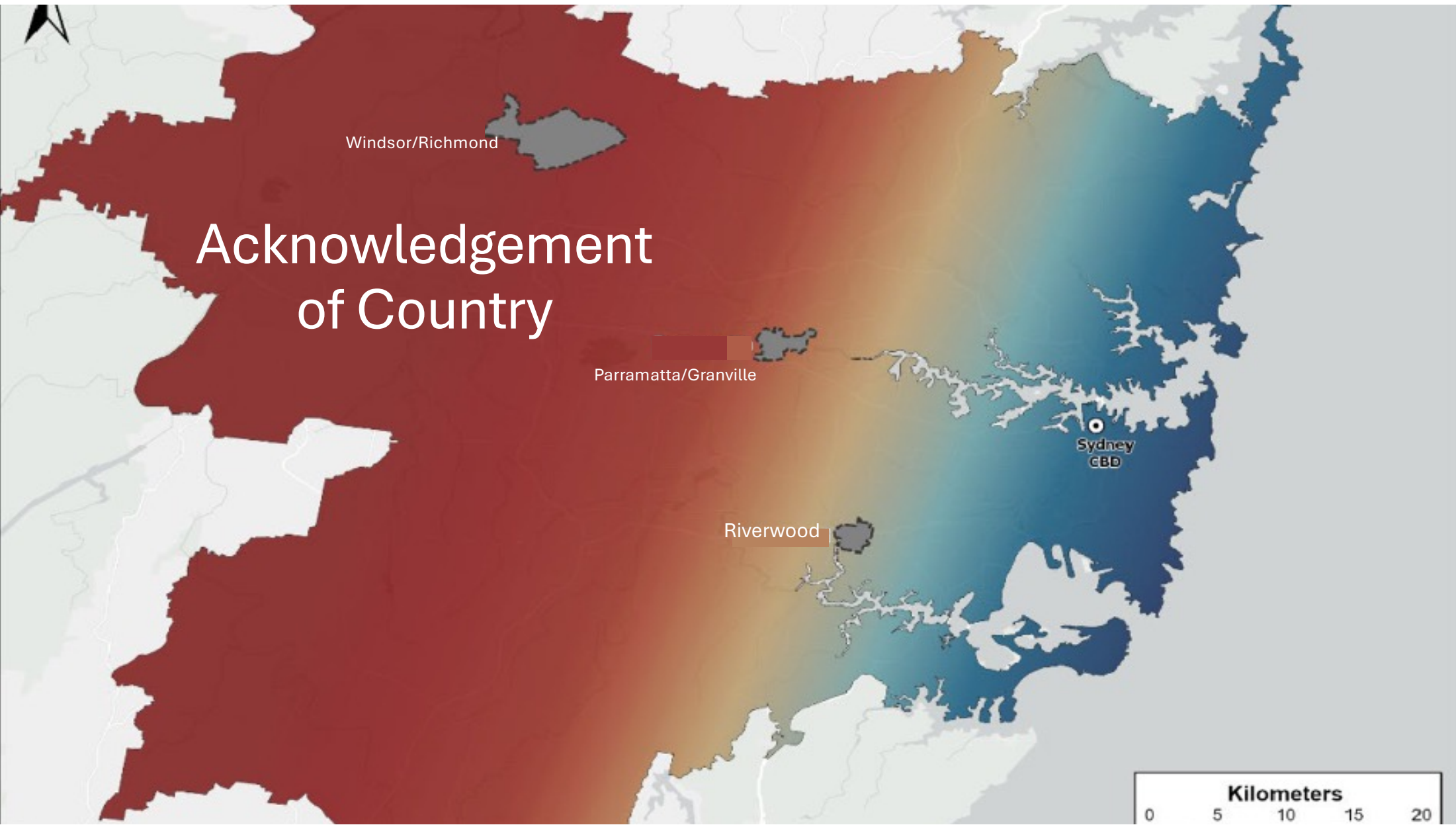
Parramatta/Granville

Riverwood

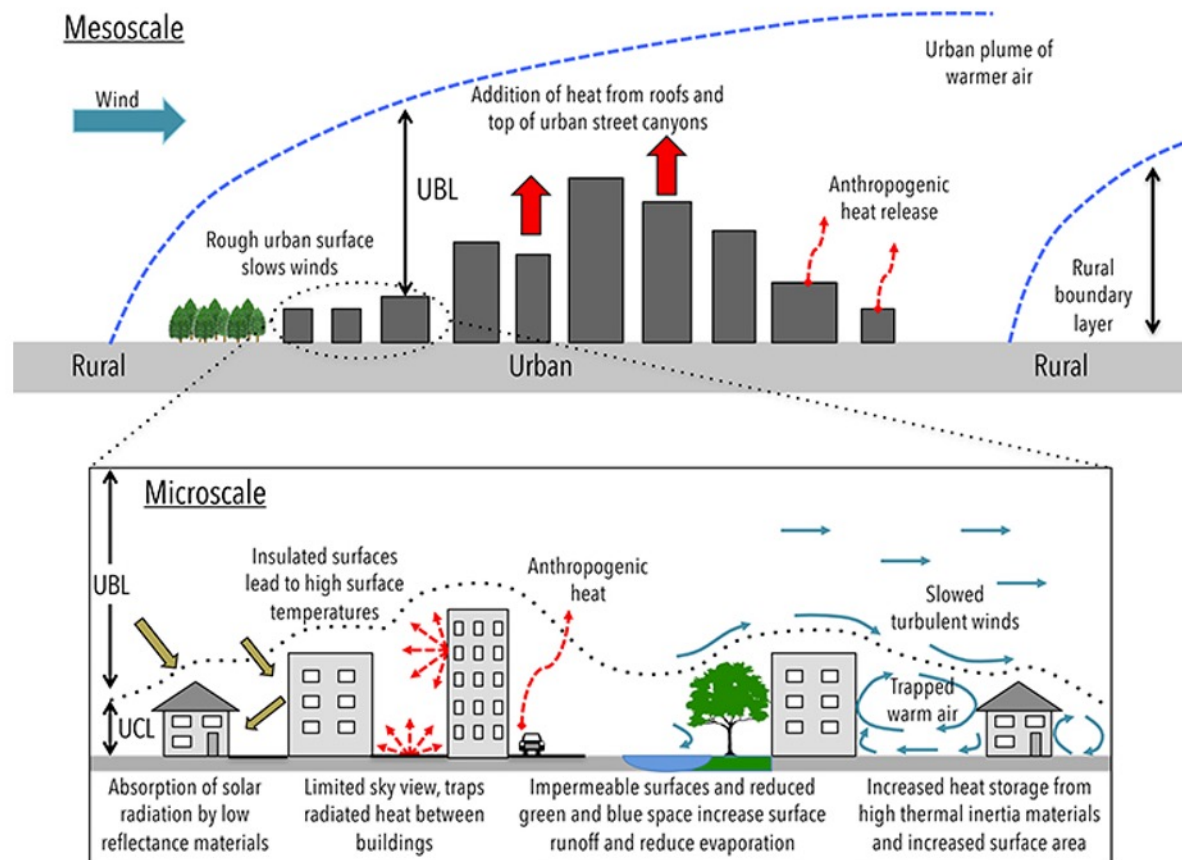
Sydney
CBD

Kilometers

0 5 10 15 20



Urban Heat Islands

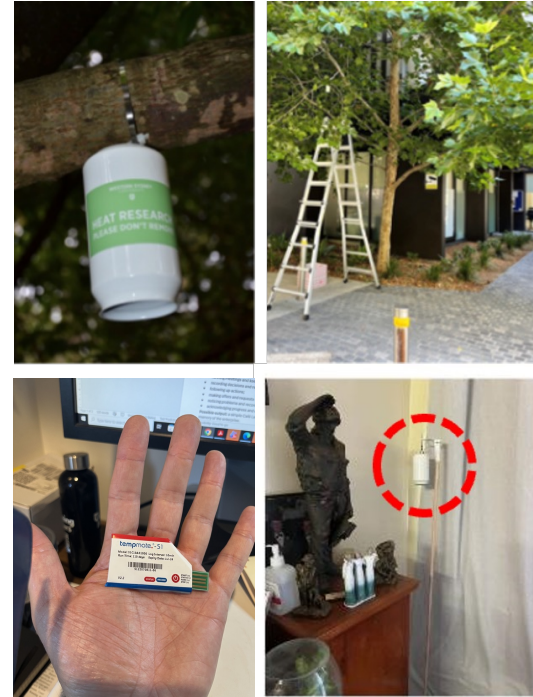
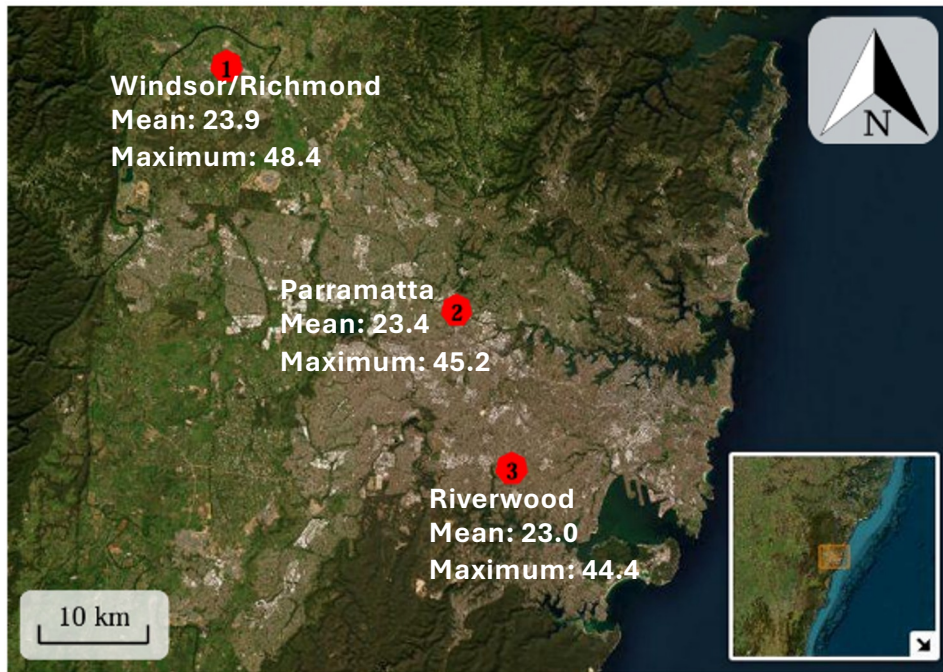


Source: Kershaw, 2017

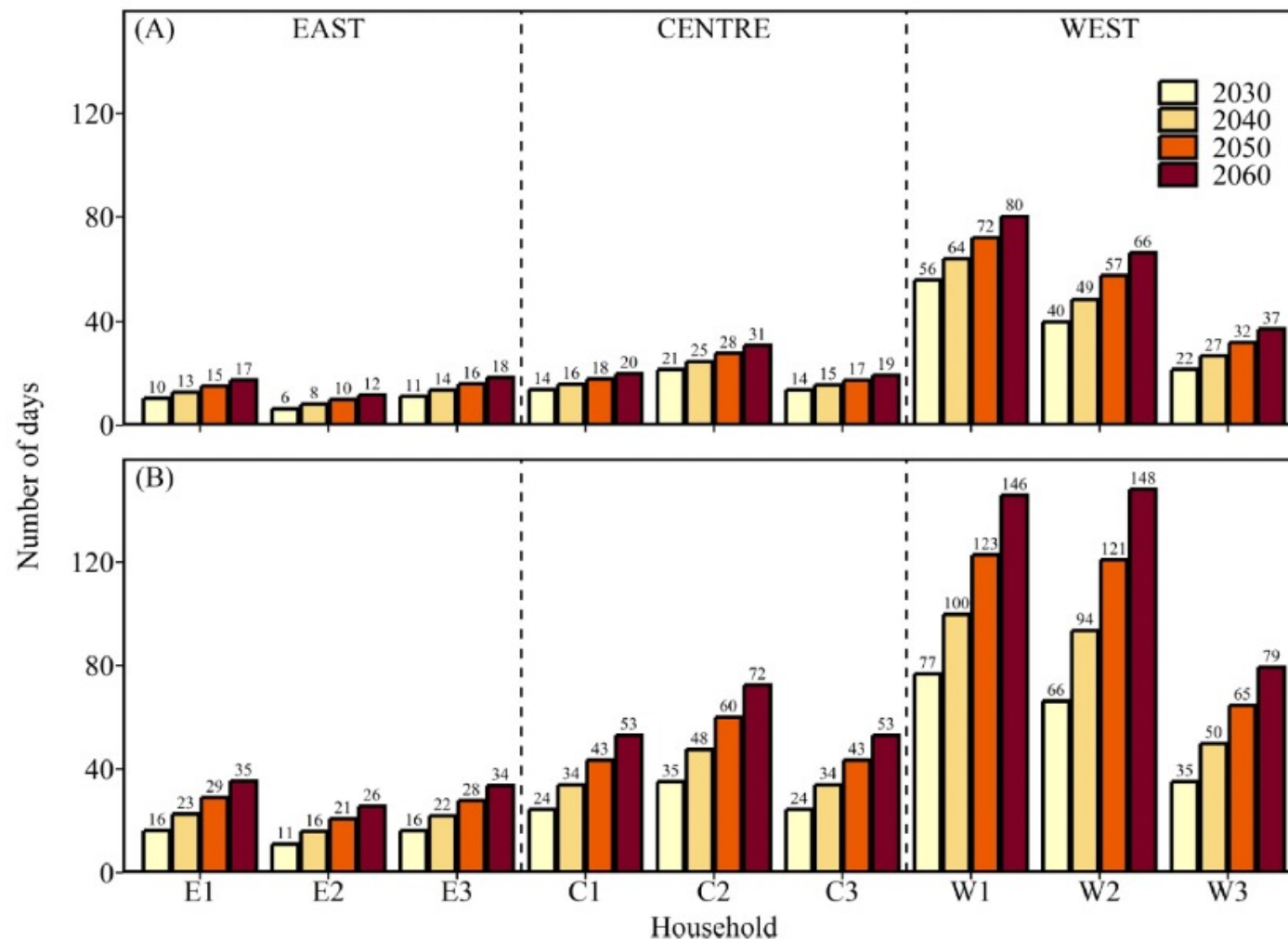
Becoming climate ready in social housing

- Understanding the heat
- Coping with heat (as individuals)
- Living with heat (climate ready actions)
- Engaging with others

Sensing: Measuring Heat in Social Housing



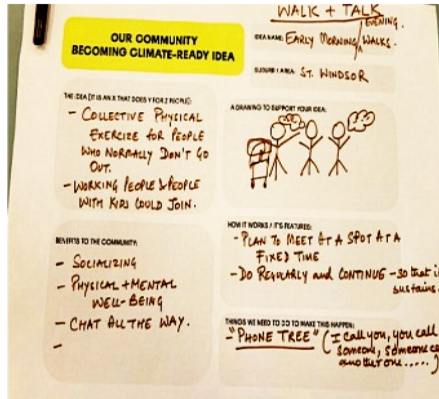
- We collected 1 million heat data points in summers 22/23, 23/24
- Each community, across all housing types saw indoor temperatures above 29 degrees (often for long stretches of time)



Pfautsch et al (2026).
 “A Battleground of Climate Change”
 Available to download from
 Science Direct

Projected number of days in coming decades when outdoor temperatures will warm indoor temperatures above thermal safety thresholds

Social Learning: Workshops with Community Housing Residents



Adaptive strategies



Cross cultural learning



Peer to Peer sharing



Cool natural spaces tour



Cool urban spaces tour



Cool foods cultural event

Patterns of living with the heat

I Retreat	Take Comfort	Chase the Air	Energy rules	Make the Air	Getting Ready	Go Great Outdoors!
Residents stay inside when it's hot; many feel trapped.	Residents' individual strategies to cope with the heat.	Residents with a car move between air-conditioned spaces.	Residents create 'rules' to manage the heat in their homes.	Residents used fans creatively.	Residents prepare for the heat.	Residents who know, visit cool places.

Cultural patterns of living with the heat



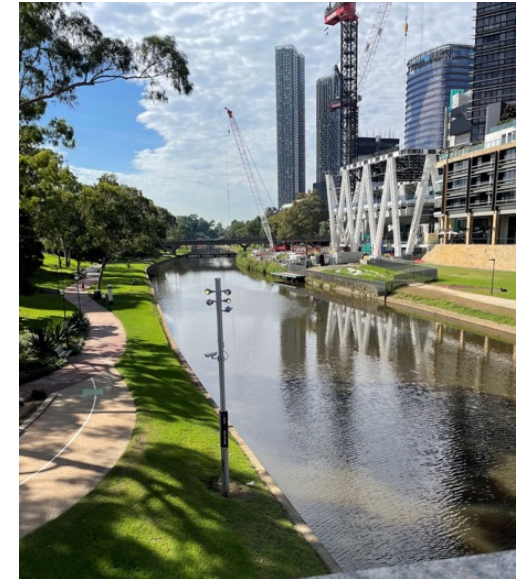
Cool Natural Spaces Tour



“We used to camp by the river on hot nights”

First Nations community researchers took us on a tour of local cool places that few other residents knew about.

Cool Urban Spaces Tour



“This lighting soothes me”

Community researchers assessed how accessible, usable and welcoming public amenities are for diverse residents.

Cultural Cooling Foods Festival



“Is the congee *halal*?”

Community researchers developed an event to share cultural knowledge about cooling foods.

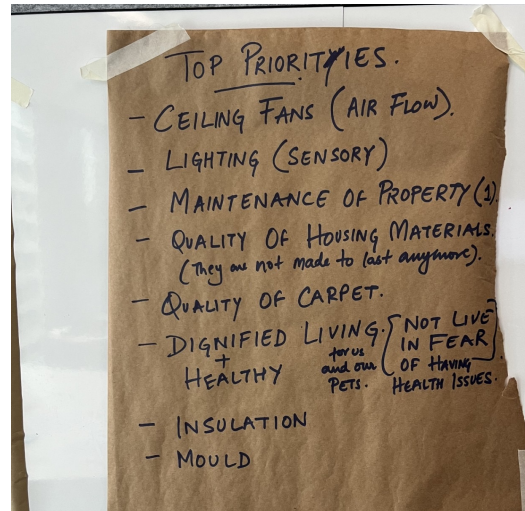
The Riverwood Cool Commons



Common room

Civic Engagement

- Film nearing completion
- Community talks
- MEERS consultation submission (May 2026)
- Improving Indoor/Outdoor Climate Adaption in Western Sydney (ongoing)
- Cooling the Commons Pattern Deck (ongoing)



An action research program that co-designs practices and infrastructures for accessible cool living in an age of urban heating.

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