

ASTROLABE GROUP

A YEAR IN REVIEW 2023

At Astrolabe Group, our focus is to deliver positive change for client, place and community by combining evidence, expertise and a uniquely empathetic approach.

Across 2023 we've brought this focus to our work with clients. We've had the opportunity to partner with local councils, state and federal government, universities, industry, not for profits, and peak associations.

For those working in policy development across planning and place, there are significant challenges we face. From cost of living pressures, housing shortages, population changes and recovering from natural disasters, just to name a few. In NSW, we also saw a change in government in March which has had ongoing changes to how the public service is organised and responding to new government priorities.

It is through our deep understanding of government, policies and systems underpinning all our work that has helped navigate these challenges. Astrolabe Group help create the conditions for positive and enduring change.

Our year in review shares some of our significant project and organisation achievements.

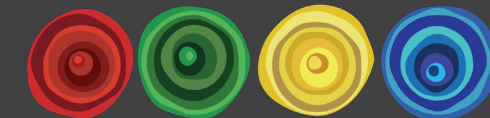
Thank you to our clients and collaborators for making 2023 a successful year that our team can be proud of.

Please get in touch - we'd welcome the opportunity to work with you in 2024.

[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)

A focus on First Nations

On Country Solutions



This year we partnered with [Thirriwirri](#) to establish [On Country Solutions](#) with a focus on empowering First Nations people on their country.

Our work is rooted in the principle that country needs people and people need country. When we work together on solutions that enable First Nations land owners with the tools, techniques, and capability to manage their land and promote their culture, we also shape healthier, more liveable places.

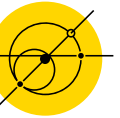
Our first projects have seen us work with Traditional Owners in Nowra, West Bunjalung and the Southern Ocean region in Victoria. We look forward to continuing to build our own learning and ongoing collaboration in 2024.

Acknowledgement of Country

Astrolabe Group acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connections to land, waters and community.

Our offices are on Gadigal and Awabakal country. We work on land that always was and always will be Aboriginal land.





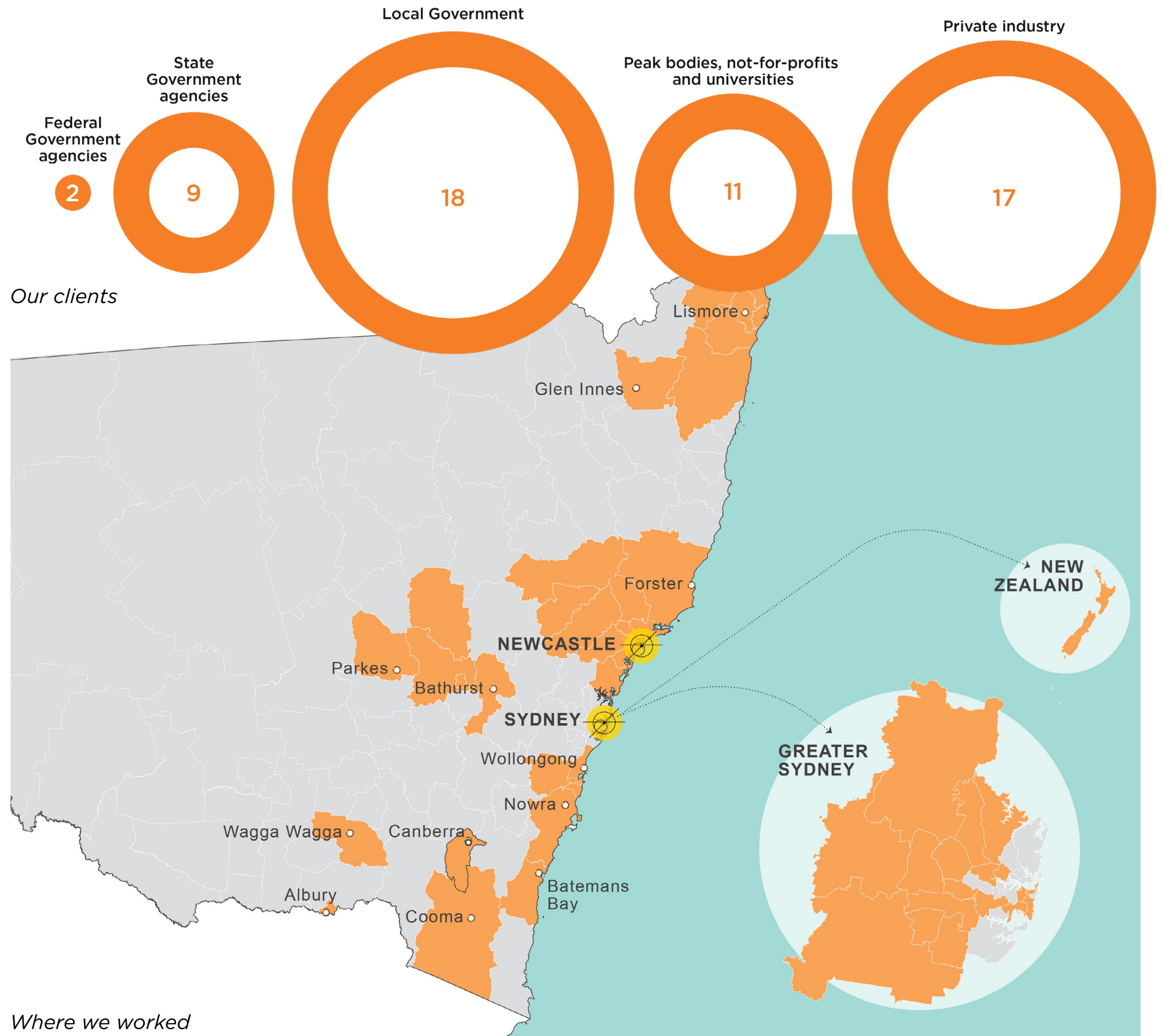
OUR WORK IN 2023

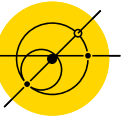
Astrolabe’s diverse portfolio across the year reflects the strength of our multidisciplinary team bringing deep expertise to projects and making a meaningful difference to people and place.

We are recognised experts at helping clients navigate complex systems to build clarity and consensus across diverse stakeholders.

This year we have worked across several policy domains including:

- **Urban and place planning** developing strategic insights to inform initiatives improving outcomes for all stakeholders
- **Infrastructure planning and policy** working to create liveable places by aligning timely and efficient delivery of infrastructure
- **Housing policy** shaping sustainable housing strategies responding to our major housing crisis
- **Economic development** fostering places that support local jobs, resilience and vibrancy









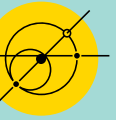
MAKING AN IMPACT



Our project highlights

Below are a handful of projects demonstrating how we're helping to build a better future.

<p>NSW Ports Master Plan 2063 </p> <p><i>NSW Ports</i></p>	<p>Contributed to NSW Ports 40-year Master Plan supporting communities and business of NSW with sustainable, efficient and productive freight network and supply chains.</p>
<p>Creative industries in Tech Central </p> <p><i>University of Technology Sydney</i></p>	<p>Exploring how integrating existing institutions and creative industries within Tech Central can support innovation, jobs and investment.</p>
<p>Affordable Housing modelling </p> <p><i>St George Community Housing</i></p>	<p>Built the development feasibility modelling and positioning paper considering the implementation for proposed changes to inclusionary zoning.</p>
<p>Economic trends and analysis </p> <p><i>Lismore City Council</i></p>	<p>Researching economic issues, trends and opportunities for local businesses, community members and the broader Lismore region.</p>
<p>Demand forecasting for public schools</p> <p><i>Schools infrastructure NSW</i></p>	<p>Peer review of demand forecasting system to ensure new schools or school upgrades are delivered in response to community need.</p>
<p>State Significant Development Application</p> <p><i>Coombes Property Group</i></p>	<p>Delivering stakeholder engagement and social impact assessment for a proposed waste management facility supporting the circular economy.</p>
<p>Cultural tourism business case</p> <p><i>Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council</i></p>	<p>Working collaboratively to establish the business case and required documentation to advance funding opportunities that will enable showcasing cultural practices, traditions, and country of the Ngoorabul people.</p>
<p>Walking and Cycling Strategy</p> <p><i>Western Sydney Health Alliance</i></p>	<p>Lead facilitator for co-design process bringing state agencies, councils and organisations with a focus on movement together to build the Western Sydney Parkland City Walking and Cycling Strategy.</p>



PULSE OF PLANNING

Capturing the pulse of customers of planning in NSW

In March 2023, Astrolabe launched the Pulse of Planning survey - seeking feedback from across the sector about the NSW Planning System - what's working, and what isn't. The Pulse outcomes provide an independent analysis of customer feedback within the NSW Planning System.

We developed the Pulse to work proactively with all stakeholders to collectively improve customer experience and the overall outcomes of the system, with the ultimate beneficiaries being the people of NSW.

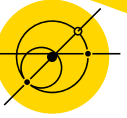
The first survey saw a huge uptake with 158 individual responses. Planners (33%) and Certifiers (26%) were the professions most represented. More than half of respondents (59%) had multiple or large-scale interactions in the twelve months prior to undertaking the survey.

We briefed the Department of Planning and Environment on the key insights from our Pulse with recommendations based on user experience and needs.

Read results from the
2023 Pulse of Planning

Visit website 





FOCUS ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence in planning

Use cases for the NSW Government

To support decision-making relating to Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the context of planning, Astrolabe delivered a horizon scan of the policy and regulatory context, available tools and capability of AI that stakeholders can use to create efficiencies in the planning industry. We additionally identified immediate use cases.

A roadmap to implement the preconditions required to build capability of systems, process and people to use AI was developed to support next steps.

Building our own understanding and capability in Artificial Intelligence

Understanding AI and being comfortable in experimenting is going to be critical to how we all use new technology in (and out) of the workplace. It's been a topic of discussion for our team across 2023.

Team hackathon

Mid-year we held an Artificial Intelligence hackathon with the challenge - 'how we might use generative AI to improve our work flows'.

This challenge was all about how work might be redesigned and elevated with AI, not replacing people.

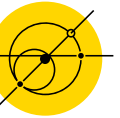
Many of the ideas generated were centred on building greater context and understanding during project discovery and how AI can help - including having a standard selection of prompts for research and how to curate and manage data.

Our internal Community of Practice (Data and AI) continues to work on experiments and use cases.

Responsible and transparent use of technology

Appreciating the risks of emerging technology is important to how we all work and how we provide transparency to clients and community.

While we are loving experimenting here at Astrolabe, we aren't using any client data unless explicitly agreed. Our approach to AI is transparent, we won't use it without exploring the approach and confirming with you first.



ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

Investing in continuous improvement

Supporting our organisation and team is important to continue to deliver work that makes a meaningful impact with quality and efficiency. This equally helps us be responsive to client needs and able to embrace change.

Recertification for our Quality Management Systems

Demonstrating a commitment to quality and continuous improvement, Astrolabe maintained its international certification ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems – a process that involved an external auditor reviewing our processes, policies and outputs over two days.

In 2023, the audit highlighted our exemplary inception process and use of project charters as a tool for project management.

We work with clients to support a culture of quality and continuous improvement. During project close we deliver an outcomes briefing and promote client involved reviews.

Introduction of paid parental leave

The introduction of paid parental leave is a significant milestone and one as a small organisation we are proud to be able to prioritise for our staff. Our staff now have access to 13 weeks of paid parental leave.

Since introducing our policy in early 2023, we've welcomed 2 'astro babies' into the world. It is a privilege to support our staff manage their family and professional roles.

Implementing cyber security policy

We've strengthened our cybersecurity defences through the implementation of a robust cybersecurity policy. The strategy is actively managed by our operations staff. It prioritises threat identification and effective response mechanisms.

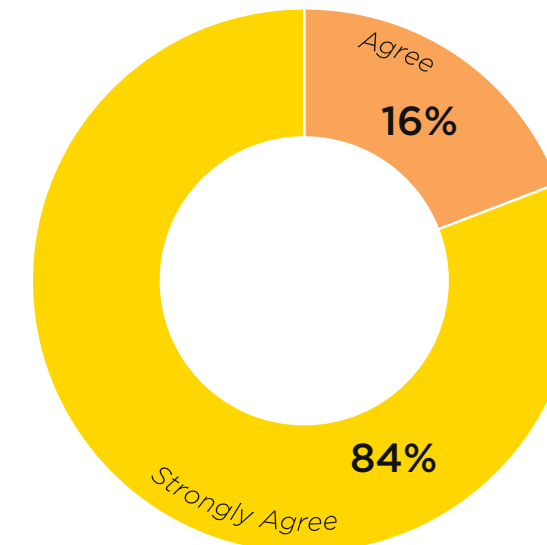
This proactive approach safeguards sensitive internal information and enhances client trust and confidence.

Annual staff sentiment survey

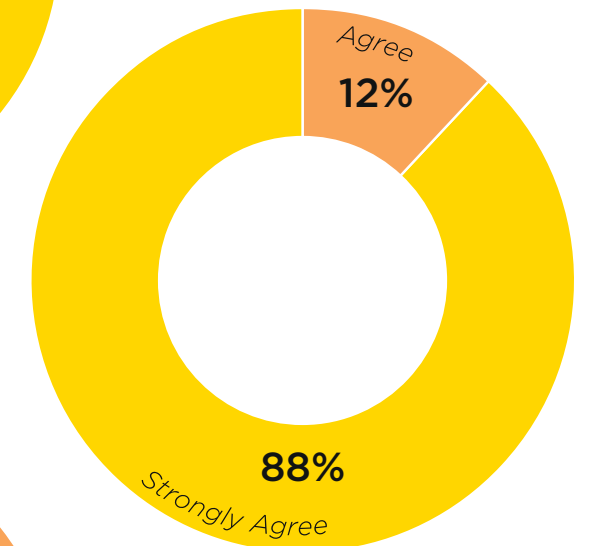
In 2022 we initiated an annual staff sentiment survey to support improvement across our workplace and how we deliver impact to our clients. The survey provides an opportunity for all staff to provide their feedback on key aspects of our business such as communication, learning and development, quality of projects and career progression.

Now in its second year, it's encouraging to see staff experience improvement in the organisation and continued positive sentiment:

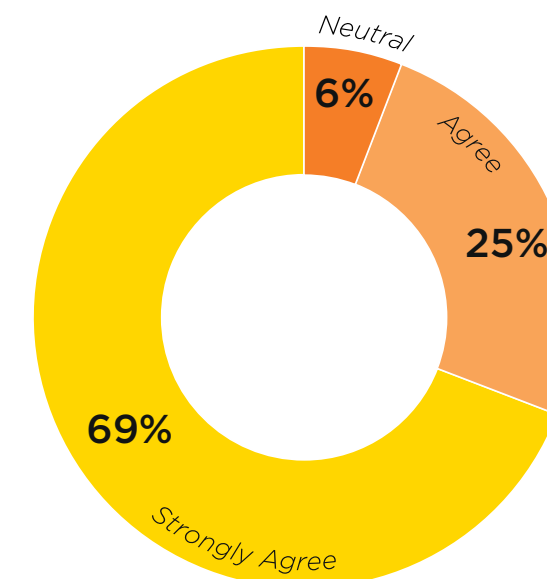
- Team feels supported and respected by one another
- How we communicate across project teams has improved
- The vision for the future is motivating
- People are proud of their work and the impact delivered



We treat each other with respect



We are a fun and engaging place to work



There are opportunities for me to learn and grow

Snapshots from our sentiment survey



GET IN TOUCH



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