

**ITEM 21. DRAFT EORA JOURNEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN -
PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

FILE NO: S102922.011

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval for the public exhibition of the City's draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan (the Plan). The draft Plan is the City's first economic action plan focused specifically on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.

The City's Economic Development Strategy (adopted 9 December 2013) identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise as a key priority. To deliver on this, the development of an economic development plan has been planned as a major workstream within the Eora Journey program, the City's primary response to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural, economic and social sustainability. The development of an economic action plan was also identified as a priority action within the City's first Reconciliation Action Plan (adopted 29 June 2015.)

The process taken to develop the Plan has involved extensive research and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise has been involved throughout this process, through procurement of lead consultants and the ongoing involvement of the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel. Council endorsed a report in June 2015 that detailed this development process and noted key emerging themes and priorities. This has enabled the City to finalise the Plan in preparation for public exhibition.

The draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan outlines how the City can work with partners to create an environment in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can thrive as business owners, employees at all levels, and as students. The Plan identifies four thematic areas where the City can play a role in working with a range of partners to deliver actions to improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including: entrepreneurship, employment, tertiary education, and identified economic sectors.

This work builds on the City's longstanding commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It provides an economic framework for future activity, and details commitments and priority actions across the four thematic areas.

The exhibition of the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will provide an opportunity for communities and organisations to comment on the City's proposed role with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development. Feedback received during the exhibition period will be incorporated into the final action plan, which will be presented to Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for public exhibition for a minimum of eight weeks;
- (B) Council establish an Eora Journey Economic Development Working Group comprising members sought via an Expression of Interest process, and endorsed by Council;
- (C) a Terms of Reference for the Eora Journey Economic Development Working Group be developed for endorsement by Council; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to undertake minor editorial amendments prior to the exhibition of the draft Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan

BACKGROUND

The Eora Journey

1. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is the City's vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. During consultation to inform its development, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community was a major contributor. The need for greater recognition and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and culture was clearly articulated by both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and by the wider community including visitors to Australia.
2. The Eora Journey program is the City's response to this call, and is aimed at contributing to sustainability for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in a broad sense; ranging from recognition of the traditional and living culture, through to ensuring economic sustainability. It comprises of four key workstreams:
 - (a) **Recognition in the public domain:** An innovative program of public art, funded by a commitment of over \$5 million of City funding to create seven major public art projects symbolising the Eora Journey.
 - (b) **Significant cultural event(s):** City support for a range of events that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, including Yabun and NAIDOC Week.
 - (c) **An Aboriginal knowledge and cultural centre:** Investigation into the provision of a local-scale Aboriginal cultural centre within Sydney.
 - (d) **An economic development plan:** Underpinning the above workstreams is the development of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, the City's first strategic action plan to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.
3. In alignment with all workstreams of the Eora Journey, the City adopted its inaugural 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan on 29 June 2015. This is a cross-divisional strategic document that outlines what the City will do to influence and contribute to reconciliation in Australia. The development of an economic action plan was also identified as a priority action for the City to improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City's local area.

Strategic Alignment

4. The development of the *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan* (the Plan) is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - with a focus on 6.2 (Facilitate and support relative equality, resilience and adaptive capacity among the City's diverse communities), and 6.3 (Develop and support local enterprise and employment).
 - (b) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City - with a focus on 7.4 (Encourage the appreciation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and its contemporary expression).

5. The City's *Economic Development Strategy* (adopted by Council on 9 December 2013) centres on further improving the solid foundations for success that exist within the City's economy, as well as creating opportunities for individuals, businesses and the community. The strategy provides an overarching framework to inform the City's economic development initiatives and articulates the City's role, priorities, and approach.
6. Within this strategy, a number of priority sectors, as well as key locations and cross-cutting themes, were identified for specific action plans. To date, three actions plans have been considered by Council: retail, tourism and tech start-ups. A further cross-cutting theme prioritised with the Strategy is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise
7. To deliver on this priority, the City has developed the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan. The Plan sets out a framework for the City to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses over the next 10 years.
8. The vision of the Plan is to work with partners to deliver a range of initiatives that, over time, create the conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive as students, as employees at all levels of organisations and as business owners.

Developing the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan

9. The development of the Plan has followed the approach detailed below:
 - (a) examined economic, social, cultural and issues; including education, training, skills development and enterprise formation;
 - (b) took into account the actions of other levels of government, the not-for-profit and private sector, the education sector and the aspirations of the community;
 - (c) sought to be innovative and exemplify leadership; and
 - (d) has been developed throughout in true partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.
10. A staged approach was taken in the development of the Plan, including (i) a detailed program of research to 'set the context' for economic development issues in the city, and (ii) a significant community engagement process, and (iii) development and testing of options and priorities with partners.
11. The primary research stage was completed by Cox Inall Ridgeway in 2014 and consisted of a number of interlinked foundation studies in order to provide context for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development within the city. It identified and examined strengths, gaps and opportunities in the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic landscape; and investigated what kind of role the City could play in improving socio-economic outcomes for the city's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

12. The City then commissioned Fivegrants Consulting to design and undertake an independent community engagement program termed the 'Eora Journey Prosperity Talk'. The program was undertaken between May and November 2014, and engaged with a wide range of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including Elders, young people, women, business owners, organisational representatives, and industry and government stakeholders.
13. The extent of the engagement included completion of over 440 digital polls, 'pop-up' engagement at five community/business events, five themed community focus groups attended by 60 people, social media engagement of over 500 people, and one-to-one interviews with key organisational stakeholders.
14. Key issues and initial City 'directions for action' were developed following the research and engagement and tested with the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel. In order to test these findings with key external partners, the City convened an *Eora Journey Economic Development Workshop* on 30 April 2015.
15. The event consisted of a facilitated workshop and was attended by 47 participants invited from organisations that have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development focus. Inside Policy were commissioned to facilitate the workshop.
16. In June 2015, Council endorsed the recommendations arising from the workshop which stated that the City should proceed in developing the Plan based on the validated priorities of entrepreneurship, employment, enhancing tertiary education opportunities, and the key industries of interest of tourism, retail, creative and digital, and financial and professional services.

Structure and focus of the Plan

17. The draft Plan recognises the crucial importance and contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have in the city's local area, as residents, organisations and business, and as individuals coming to Sydney for work, study and recreation. Sydney's LGA is home to a vibrant and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population from all over Australia. The culture and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to this land dates back tens of thousands of years.
18. The economy of Sydney is undergoing transition, becoming more knowledge based. This economic transformation presents opportunities for increased prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
19. The Plan provides an overview of contemporary challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in regard to employment, entrepreneurship and education and may act to limit access to opportunities within the knowledge economy. It states that, unless partners take concerted action to address these challenges and create the conditions for excellence to thrive in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, then opportunities may remain reduced.
20. In the face of these challenges, the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan represents the City's first economic commitment to ensuring enhanced prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It provides a framework for action that will guide the City's actions over a 10-year period.

21. Analysis from the research and engagement revealed a number of thematic areas that require further action by the City and partners. These themes include:
- (a) **Create an economic hub:** Ensure support and capacity building for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.
 - (b) **Maximise employment outcomes:** Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access opportunities, progress and thrive in the local economy. This focuses on issues such as pre-employment support, job seeking, job-readiness and support for stronger career pathways.
 - (c) **Enhance tertiary opportunities:** Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in accessing, completing and maximising the benefits of tertiary education.
 - (d) **Grow key sectors of the economy:** Support business ownership and employment opportunities in areas such as finance and professional services, tourism, retail, creative and digital businesses.
22. The City's approach to delivering change in these important areas is detailed in the Plan. It recognises that it is vital that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are at the centre of planning for, and achieving, prosperity. It also recognises the significant efforts of a wide-range of partners, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in working towards enhanced economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
23. It is consistent with the approach taken by the NSW Government through the OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment) program. As part of OCHRE, the NSW Government is developing an 'Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework' to drive the long-term and sustainable economic prosperity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities across NSW.

Key commitments and projects

24. Under each theme, the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan includes actions to be delivered by the City directly or in partnership with other levels of government and industry.
25. The actions within the Plan provide commitments for how the City will undertake activity. Specific projects will be scoped and implemented in partnership on a year-by-year basis with a wide range of organisations and businesses to deliver against these actions over the life of the Plan.
26. To ensure that delivery of the Plan is informed and guided by external expertise, the City will via an expression of interest process, convene a Working Group, to be known as the Eora Journey Economic Development Working Group, comprising members of the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and appropriate representatives from external partner organisations. To clarify the roles and responsibilities of this group, including membership, duration and focus, a Terms of Reference will be developed and Council endorsement will be sought prior to convening the first meeting of this group.

27. The City has begun to develop a number of pilot projects to address priority actions within the Action Plan. These will be delivered over the next two years as City priorities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development. They include:
- (a) **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity baseline research** - Creation of baseline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity data within the City of Sydney.
 - (b) **Business support services (signposting and resource creation)** - Developing a detailed understanding of existing business support resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and delivering an appropriate mechanism to communicate this information.
 - (c) **Business support seminar** - Assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners in navigating government procurement processes.
 - (d) **Investigating demand for business space** - Assessing demand and exploring models for affordable space provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the City of Sydney Local Government Area, putting forward a proposed option on a way forward for the City.
 - (e) **Supporting connections for job-seekers** – Exploring sponsorship opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers in interacting with employers and employment focussed- organisations.
 - (f) **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student networking opportunities** - Working with tertiary education partners to host an inaugural networking event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enhance connections.
 - (g) **Finance and Professional Services employment participation** - Delivering a series of forums to bring together industry leaders to examine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation with the finance and professional services sector, share best practice and discuss potential joint working.
 - (h) **Business enterprise pilot program** - Administering a tourism business enterprise pilot to create employment opportunities within the Redfern area.
 - (i) **Supporting collaboration in the Creative and Digital sectors** – Supporting opportunities within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and digital sectors or organisations to meet, discuss issues, and develop actions to enable sector growth. (In February 2016, Council agreed provision of sponsorship to National Centre of Indigenous Excellence to support the delivery of the April 2016 Indigenous Digital Excellence (IDX) National Summit.)

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Organisational Impact

28. The actions within from the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will be delivered by relevant existing Business Units over a 10 year period. Project activity has been incorporated into Business Unit Plans for 2016/17 and will be reviewed on a year-by-year basis. It is not envisaged that the delivery of these early actions will require resources outside of usual budgeting processes.

Risks

29. Building trust and demonstrating successful delivery against stated goals will be essential in positioning the City as a reliable partner in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development. Through the development and delivery of initiatives identified as actions within the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, the City is demonstrating commitment to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development issues that will prove essential in building trust with key organisations and community.

Social / Cultural / Community

30. The development and implementation of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will provide significant benefits to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Through working to increase opportunities for economic participation, the Plan will result in greater prominence of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture and community activity throughout the city area.
31. During delivery of the initiatives identified, the City will ensure all activity is taken forward in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses. Ensuring participation in the delivery of initiatives generates employment and capacity building opportunities, as well as furthering less tangible outcomes such as sense of pride in community and heritage.
32. The development and implementation of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, and resulting project activity, will also provide opportunities for City staff to learn more about the importance and significance of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and share this knowledge throughout the organisation.

Economic

33. The development and implementation of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is intended to provide significant economic benefits to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This will include support for entrepreneurs and business owners, measures to stimulate enterprise growth, increase participation in employment, and explore access to education and training opportunities.
34. As well as creating employment, training, and capacity building opportunities through delivery of the initiatives identified with the Plan, the City will also be in a stronger position to enact economic change going forward through building trust and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

35. The costs associated with the development and public exhibition of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan are included within the Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17.
36. For the delivery of projects identified within the Plan, provision of resources has been included within 2016/17 budgets for the delivery of priority projects across a range of Council business units.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

37. Local Government Act, 1993.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

38. The exhibition period will commence for a minimum of eight weeks following Council approval for the public exhibition of the draft Plan. Activities to occur during the public exhibition period include a forum/ briefing for key partners (including representatives of businesses, community organisations, and government), online engagement and social media, and individual briefings of key stakeholders.
39. Monitoring of feedback will occur throughout the public exhibition period, and key themes raised during the public exhibition period and engagement with stakeholders will be captured and provided to Council as part of the report proposing the adoption of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan.
40. Following amendment, the draft Plan will be reported to Council for adoption of a final action plan in late 2016.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

41. Structured consultation with a wide range of representatives from key organisational, business, government and academic stakeholders has been undertaken to inform the development of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan.
42. It is proposed that the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan be placed on public exhibition for a minimum period of eight weeks. During this time, key business, organisational and government stakeholders will be briefed, either at an event hosted by the City or direct briefings of their organisations.
43. City staff will analyse the feedback during the exhibition period and incorporate it, where appropriate, into the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan. It will then be submitted for adoption by Council.

KIM WOODBURY

Chief Operating Officer

Ross Manford, Strategy Advisor - Economic