

**ITEM 21. EORA JOURNEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ADOPTION  
POST EXHIBITION AND PRIORITY PROJECTS**

**FILE NO: X005109.002**

**SUMMARY**

The City's draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan (draft action plan) is the City's first economic action plan focused specifically on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise. It forms a central pillar of the City's Eora Journey initiative, seeking to ensure that the celebration of culture through arts and events is aligned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic sustainability in Sydney.

The process taken to develop the draft action plan prior to exhibition involved significant research, comprehensive community engagement programs, input throughout from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert consultants, and continued guidance from the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel. The draft action plan outlines how the City can work with partners across four key areas to assist in improving opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities: entrepreneurship, employment, tertiary education, and identified economic sectors.

On 16 May 2016, Council resolved unanimously to place the draft action plan on public exhibition. The eight-week exhibition period (23 May to 18 July 2016) presented an opportunity for organisations and communities to review the plan and provide feedback. A range of approaches and activities were undertaken to promote the public exhibition and invite feedback from stakeholders, including events, media advertising, printed materials, media releases, social media and the website [sydneyyoursay.com.au](http://sydneyyoursay.com.au).

Feedback received during the exhibition period was positive and supportive. Stakeholder responses, including feedback received from key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused organisations such as Indigenous Business Australia, Supply Nation, and Aboriginal Affairs NSW, demonstrated strong endorsement for the approach taken to develop the action plan, its themes and associated actions.

Following analysis of the feedback provided during the public exhibition period, minor changes to the draft action plan are recommended (refer to Attachment A). These include an additional action to support business representatives groups, further clarifying the City's role in housing and affordability, and providing more detail about the implementation of projects under the action plan.

In advance of an adopted action plan, the City has undertaken a range of activities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development in Sydney, including: sponsorship of NCIE's Indigenous Digital Excellence Summit 2016, sponsorship of Indigenous Business Month launch events 2015 and 2016, delivery of a procurement support workshop for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners in October 2016, and facilitating collaboration between university partners.

The City will deliver a range of projects over the next 18 months across the themes identified within the action plan. These include, but are not limited to:

- undertaking a demand analysis study for the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific business incubation space;
- business activity research;

- sponsorship of a business skills and networking program;
- development of a reception event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, internship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
- a business enterprise project in the tourism sector (discussed further below).

Following the public exhibition period, it is recommended that Council adopt the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan incorporating recommended changes as shown at Attachment A.

### *Business Enterprise Project*

As a priority project, intended to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism sector, the City has currently allocated \$100,000 in the operational budget to develop a Business Enterprise Project in the Redfern area. This project will seek to assist a business or organisation develop and deliver an authentic and immersive visitor experience that celebrates the contribution of Redfern to self-determination and activism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This report seeks Council approval to use the existing budget as grant funding rather than operational expenditure. This will enable the City to seek submissions from potential partners through an expression of interest process, ensuring the project can be developed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation(s) in alignment with grant program objectives.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the results and response to the public exhibition of the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (B) Council adopt the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan in order to correct any minor drafting errors;
- (D) the City issue a call for Expressions of Interest from tourism organisations/ operators for a one-off Business Enterprise Project to access grant funding up to a maximum of \$100,000, to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism project in the Redfern area; and
- (E) Council note that any recommendations for grant provision as part of the Business Enterprise Project will be reported to Council for resolution at a later date.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Eora Journey Economic Development Plan

**Attachment B:** Public Exhibition Report – Findings and Response – Eora Journey  
Economic Development Plan

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is the City's first economic action plan focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It delivers on commitments within both the City's Economic Development Strategy and the Eora Journey program, which is the City's leading initiative to celebrate the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney. It is intended to ensure that recognition and celebration of culture is underpinned by access to economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

### **Development of the action plan and public exhibition**

2. The development of the draft action plan followed a thorough and staged process, including: detailed research to 'set the context' for economic development issues in the city, a significant community engagement program, and development and testing of options and priorities with partners.
3. The independent community engagement program, termed the 'Eora Journey Prosperity Talk', 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.
4. The extent of the engagement involved 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.
5. To test the findings of the engagement program with key external partners, the City convened the Eora Journey Economic Development Workshop in April 2015. The event consisted of a facilitated workshop within the Lord Mayor's Reception Room, and was attended by 47 participants invited from organisations that have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development focus. Following this activity, the draft action plan was developed.
6. On 16 May 2016, Council resolved unanimously to place the draft Eora Journey Economic Development Plan on public exhibition. The draft action plan was on public exhibition for a period of eight weeks, from 23 May 2016 until 18 July 2016.
7. A strategic approach to public exhibition ensured that a range of approaches and activities were utilised to promote the public exhibition and invite feedback from stakeholders, including: events, media advertising, printed materials, media releases, social media and the [sydneyoursay.com.au](http://sydneyoursay.com.au) website.
8. The feedback received during the public exhibition period demonstrated strong endorsement for the approach taken to develop the action plan, the themes, and the actions. A total of 23 responses were received via formal email submissions and online survey returns. Organisations which demonstrated support included: Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Destination NSW, Office of Environment and Heritage NSW, Moreton Consulting, Urban Growth, Indigenous Business Australia, Supply Nation and Yarn'n Aboriginal Employment Services.

9. The four themes of the action plan are:
  - (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; and
  - (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.
10. Changes to the action plan, based on feedback received during the public exhibition process, are outlined in detail in Attachment B. These include an additional action to support business representatives groups, further clarifying the City's role in housing and affordability, and providing more detail about the implementation of projects under the action plan.
11. The ideas and feedback provided by participants in both the community consultation and during the public exhibition will continue to be referenced in developing projects aligned with identified action area.

#### **Priority projects for delivery**

12. 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.
13. Specific projects to deliver against actions will be scoped and implemented in partnership on a year-by-year basis with a wide range of organisations and businesses.
14. In advance of an adopted action plan, the City has begun to develop and deliver a number of projects to address priority actions. These City priorities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development will be delivered over the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years. They include:

#### **Business-focused projects**

- (a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity baseline research: Research to create a baseline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity data within the City of Sydney.
- (b) Supporting networking and best practice events: The City sponsored Indigenous Business Month launch events in 2015 and 2016. In November 2016, Council is being asked within a separate Council report to recommend a grant application from the New South Wales Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (NSWICC) through the Village Business Grant 2016/17 program to deliver a series of events for Indigenous business owners.

- (c) Business support events: The City delivered a workshop to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners in navigating government procurement processes in October 2016. Further events and seminars will be programmed based on identified need.
- (d) Investigating demand for business space: Research to assess demand and explore models for affordable space provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the City of Sydney local government area, and determine options for the role of the City in meeting this demand.

### **Employment projects**

- (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.

### **Tertiary education focussed activities**

- (f) Facilitating connection between tertiary education institutions: The City has convened a cross-institutional working group of relevant stakeholders from tertiary education institutions in Sydney to develop projects that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- (g) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student networking opportunities: Working with tertiary education partners to host an inaugural reception and networking event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enhance connections.
- (h) Student Internship opportunities: Working with tertiary education partners to create student internship opportunities in the City for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **Sector specific projects**

- (i) 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 collaboration.
- (j) 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. City sponsored the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence to deliver the Indigenous Digital Excellence (IDX) National Summit in April 2016.
- (k) Tourism – Business Enterprise Project: Administering a tourism business enterprise project to create employment opportunities within the Redfern area (further detailed information provided below.)

**Business Enterprise Project**

15. As a priority project under the Action Plan, the City is seeking to assist a business or organisation to develop an authentic and immersive visitor experience that celebrates the contribution of Redfern to self-determination and activism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
16. The City has currently allocated operational budget to develop the Business Enterprise Project. To ensure the project can be fully developed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation(s) in alignment with stated project objectives, it has been determined that a grant funding approach would be more appropriate than the City directly procuring tourism services.
17. The City will look to invite Expressions of Interest from tourism organisations to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism project in the Redfern area. Project proposals will be assessed against the following objectives:
  - (a) the development of product for visitors that celebrates the unique Aboriginal history of Redfern and share that role of Redfern in self-determination;
  - (b) creation of direct employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
  - (c) training and capacity building opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
  - (d) creation of a sustainable tourism product that helps attract visitation to the Redfern area beyond the duration of the funding program.
18. Following assessment of the submissions, the City will support the successful respondent to deliver its project proposals through making grant funding available. This will be a one-off grant project outside of the City's Grants Program using an existing budget. The maximum available grant funding to be made available under the business enterprise project will be \$100,000. The grant recipient will be responsible for all aspects of the delivery of the project.
19. Recommendations for the grant provision for the Business Enterprise Project will be reported to Council for resolution at a later date.

**Eora Journey Economic Development Working Group**

20. To ensure that delivery of the action plan is informed and guided by external expertise, on 16 May 2016 Council resolved to establish an Eora Journey Economic Development Working Group (Working Group), comprising members of the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and appropriate representative partner organisations.
21. Terms of Reference for this Working Group are under development and, following review and input from the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, will be submitted to Council for adoption.

## **KEY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision**

22. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is aligned with the following *SS2030* 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.)
23. The City’s Economic Development Strategy (adopted by Council in 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.
24. 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 action plans have been considered by the City: retail, tourism and tech startups. A further cross-cutting theme prioritised with the strategy is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise

### **Organisational Impact**

25. The adoption of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will allow relevant business units to develop and deliver projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development over a 10 year period.
26. 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 actions will require resources outside of usual budgeting processes.

### **Risks**

27. Adoption of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, and demonstrating successful delivery against stated goals, will be essential in building trust and positioning the City as a reliable partner in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development. Through the development and delivery of initiatives identified as actions within the action plan, the City is demonstrating commitment to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development issues in Sydney.



28. Given the detailed and comprehensive community engagement that has underpinned the development of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, delay in its adoption risks the high level of goodwill and support towards the City by organisations and communities who have contributed to its development.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

29. The adoption and implementation of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will provide benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Through working to increase opportunities for economic participation, the Plan will also result in greater prominence of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture and community activity throughout the city area.
30. The City will ensure all activity is taken forward in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses. This participation generates employment and capacity building opportunities, as well as furthering less tangible outcomes such as sense of pride in community and heritage.
31. The implementation of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan 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.
32. The Action Plan aligns with the City's Social Sustainability Policy – A City for All, which includes a focus on the principles of social justice, social inclusion, equity, and working in partnership to further the social and economic interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Economic**

33. The City's Economic Development Strategy (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. A cross-cutting theme prioritised within the Strategy is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.
34. 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.
35. As well as working to create employment, training, and capacity building opportunities, the City will also be in a stronger position to enact ongoing economic change as it will build trust and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

36. The costs associated with the adoption of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan are included within the Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning budget for 2016/17.
37. For the delivery of projects to address actions within the action plan during 2016/17, provision of resources has been included within the 2016/17 budgets across relevant Council business units, including Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning, City Business, Strategic Community Engagement, and Grants and Sponsorship.
38. Budget for the Business Enterprise Project has been included with the 2016/17 Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning operating budget, and future year forward projections (by way of a funding agreement entered into by the City with Urban Growth Development Corporation in 2014).

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

39. Local Government Act, 1993.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

40. The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan will be reviewed at the end of the first five years of being implemented.
41. Timing for the Business Enterprise Project will include undertaking an Expression of Interest process to enable engagement of a delivery partner within the 2016/17 financial year, with project delivery occurring over subsequent financial years.

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