

**ITEM 3.2 OPENING OF EAST SYDNEY COMMUNITY AND ARTS CENTRE AND
FOLEY STREET CREATIVE SPACES PRECINCT****FILE NO: S051491****MINUTE BY THE LORD MAYOR**To Council:

On Saturday 6 May 2017, I was proud to launch the beautifully redesigned East Sydney Community and Arts Centre (once known as Heffron Hall) and the new Foley Street creative spaces precinct.

These openings are part of the City's \$21 million investment on major projects to transform Sydney's east.

East Sydney Community and Arts Centre

Thanks to a terrific creative team, this building has been transformed into a beautiful, light-filled community and arts centre.

It now has multi-purpose spaces for rehearsal, creative and community use, including new spaces for children, and complements the Eternity Playhouse over the road.

Room ventilators and voids mean there's no need for air-conditioning; rooftop photovoltaic panels generate the power; and rainwater is collected to irrigate the plants. Lifts, ramps, accessible toilets and technology for the hearing impaired mean it's a space that everyone can use and enjoy.

We also recreated a wonderful park and play area on the adjoining reserve, with easy access from the centre as well as from Palmer Street. The new play equipment includes a slippery dip, a rope-climbing tunnel and a basket swing.

These were designed especially for the site and were made chiefly in France by the Australian Proludic company which uses manufacturing techniques that are not available in Australia and which come with strong warranties and a long life cycle.

There is also a fairy garden and nature-inspired play elements. We've increased the grassed area and new paths, seating and energy-efficient lighting have been installed.

The hall's rich history dates back to 1966 when a section of the reserve was built on as a venue for meetings, music and theatre performances, counselling services, food co-operatives, weddings, funerals and Mardi Gras events.

In the late 1970s, the Council appointed a committee from the local community to manage the hall, and Sister Carol Pedersen, known as "the flying nun" founded D4 Darlinghurst, a self-help centre in the lower part of the hall which ran until 1986, organising care programs for women and children and counselling and free breakfasts for those in need.

From 1988, the hall was leased to the Metropolitan Community Church, led by the Rev Greg Smith, welcoming a congregation of all genders, sexualities, ages and cultural backgrounds.

The church also provided community services – especially for those affected by HIV/AIDS. When the church moved to Petersham in 2009, the building was leased to Queen Street Studios.

Now, as part of the centre's redevelopment, a new public artwork *S(w)ing* by Turpin + Crawford Studio will brighten the hall's Burton Street façade. *S(w)ing* is an artwork literally at play.

It has three giant translucent discs, and children playing in the space below will be able to pull the 'ropes' to make the discs glide.

It's the finishing touch on what I am sure will become a well-used and much-loved centre for our community.

I would like to thank everyone involved in this \$10 million renewal:

- our architects, LahzNimmo;
- our building contractor, Gledhill Constructions;
- our landscape architects, Spackman Mossop Michaels;
- Jenny Turpin and Michael Crawford of The Turpin Crawford studio for the art work;
- members of our Design Advisory Panel who helped guide the design; and
- all the City staff involved in the project.

Foley Street Creative Spaces Precinct

Following the launch of the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, I walked around the corner to launch another City of Sydney initiative, the Foley Street creative spaces precinct, an extension of our Oxford Street creative spaces program.

Sydney's creative workers are a vital part of the city's vibe and excitement – and also our economy – and we actively look for ways to foster them.

We know it's difficult for them to find affordable space to live and work in the global city, and so, in 2012, we opened spaces on Oxford Street to a group of creative workers. They were involved in design and architecture, media and film, visual arts, contemporary performance, social enterprise ventures and more.

Since then, 36 organisations have enjoyed subsidised office and retail space; thousands of creative people have benefitted; it has brought almost \$3 million to the local economy and attracted more than 85,000 visitors to Oxford Street.

It has been a boon for the street, for our tenants and for the city as a whole.

We have now developed the under-used garage spaces downstairs into the bespoke retail spaces facing onto Foley Street and partially closed the street to make it a more appealing space.

The first tenants of these new Foley Street spaces include:

- **The Tribe** – founded by visual merchandiser Jess Polaschek, the Tribe’s shopfront on Foley Street features artwork, jewellery and homewares by both local Sydney artists and talented regional designers. The Tribe aims to provide a platform for emerging creatives to develop their brand and showcase their work to a wider market;
- **Spunky Bruiser** – specialising in sustainable and ethical fashion, Rebecca Frost and Christian Orso of Spunky Bruiser make one-off men’s, women’s and children’s designs by hand. They use reclaimed and repurposed materials and incorporate stencilling, applique and other vintage design techniques;
- **Bermuda Black** – run by self-taught shoemaker Marina Roorda, Bermuda Black offers a bespoke shoe design service, along with a range of off-the-shelf shoe and clothing designs. Bermuda Black’s Foley Street retail space is combined with an open studio and workshop where customers can watch Marina at work and see her suite of shoemaker’s tools;
- **Studio Enti** – specialising in porcelain tableware and lighting, Studio Enti’s Naomi Taplin has designed ranges for some of Sydney’s biggest restaurants, including Nomad in Surry Hills and Lotus at Barangaroo. Her Foley Street shopfront will feature workshop and retail spaces where customers can learn more about the ceramics design process and take part in regular workshops; and
- **Fine Fellow** – started by fashion blogger Giuseppe Santamaria and jewellery designer Clara Ho, Fine Fellow is a concept retail store that presents locally designed, handcrafted men’s fashion, accessories, homewares and gifts. Supporting its aim of making Foley Street a new fashion destination, Fine Fellow will also offer regular events and studio talks featuring local Sydney makers.

I am very proud of these additions to Foley Street which will contribute significantly to Sydney’s cultural scene and economic development.

I want to thank everyone involved in the project:

- our architects, Norton Jago;
- Trinity Quality Interiors for the construction; and
- all the City staff involved.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) note the completion of these two wonderful City projects; and
- (B) thank all the City of Sydney staff and contractors involved.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor