

ITEM 3. DRAFT CULTURAL RIBBON STRATEGY – PUBLIC EXHIBITION**FILE NO: S123840****SUMMARY**

In June 2008, Council adopted Sustainable Sydney 2030, which included the Cultural Ribbon as one of “Ten Key Project Ideas”. Subsequently, Council adopted the City Art Public Art Strategy 2011 and Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024, which both reinforce the opportunity that the Cultural Ribbon offers to the cultural life of our city, whether it is strengthening the journey between our cultural institutions or the story-telling opportunity of the Eora Journey Harbour Walk.

A draft Cultural Ribbon Strategy (the Strategy) has been prepared by the City following preliminary discussions with external stakeholders. The Strategy brings definition to the project idea of the Cultural Ribbon by testing and developing the idea and identifying a series of possible actions for the City to materialise the project.

Indicative project priorities for implementation have also be identified to assist the City in the allocation of expenditure from the capital works budget, and inform any future capital and operational budgets if appropriate.

It is recommended that the Strategy be placed on public exhibition for a period of four weeks. A final Strategy will be formally presented to Council for adoption following the public exhibition, incorporating the results of community and key stakeholder consultations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the draft Cultural Ribbon Strategy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for public exhibition for a minimum period of four weeks;
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to undertake minor editorial and graphical amendments to the draft Strategy prior to its public exhibition; and
- (C) a report be brought back to Council with the results of public and stakeholder comments from the exhibition period and a recommended final Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Cultural Ribbon Strategy

Attachment B: Indicative Implementation Plan and Project Budget Allocation

BACKGROUND

1. The term “Cultural Ribbon” was coined in 2008 at one of the key *Sustainable Sydney 2030* consultation forums by the actor, and then co-director of the Sydney Theatre Company in Walsh Bay, Cate Blanchett. The term described a walking route between Walsh Bay to the Museum of Contemporary Art and Opera House. It was proposed as both a wayfinding strategy and a physical representation of an alliance of arts organisations and institutions.
2. The Cultural Ribbon was subsequently identified as one of the “Ten Key Project Ideas” in the *Sustainable Sydney 2030* document. It was described as “a walking trail linking Sydney’s leading cultural landmarks along the harbour’s edge,” delivering “better information and interpretation of Sydney’s rich history and culture for visitors and tourists” becoming a means to “strengthen and support the cultural life of the city...helping boost Sydney as a cultural destination.”
3. The Cultural Ribbon idea was adopted by Council in June 2008 as part of *Sustainable Sydney 2030*.
4. It was identified as a project that could reinforce *A Cultural and Creative City*, key direction 7 of *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, in recognition that arts and cultural activities are fundamental to liveability, tolerance, quality of life and, increasingly, to economic development. In addition, linked to the Eora Journey, the Cultural Ribbon was to have a broad historical-interpretive dimension, utilising best practice heritage interpretation, public art, lighting and wayfinding elements to create a unique and legible experience.
5. Since the epithet was coined in 2008, the Cultural Ribbon, and variations of the term, such as “Arts Ribbon” or “Arts and Cultural Ribbon”, have been used in various state government policy and planning documents to refer to a range of different things. In the NSW Government’s “A Plan for Growing Sydney”, the Cultural Ribbon idea was used as a means of explaining and justifying a distribution of funding according to geographic location. In planning and design documents prepared by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA), the Cultural Ribbon refers to both a concentration of cultural activities along the water, but also a walking route that loops into The Rocks.
6. In 2011, Council approved the City Art Public Art Strategy, which reinforces the importance of the Cultural Ribbon and the Eora Journey as key public art and city transformation projects.
7. After extensive public consultation, in 2014, Council adopted the Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024, which also reiterated the opportunity that the Cultural Ribbon offers to culture and tourism and precinct distinctiveness.
8. The Chief Executive Officer held a workshop with key stakeholders in 2015 to discuss a coordinated approach to cultural planning in the city, with the focus being on the public domain experience between venues and the need for venues to extend their planning / programming beyond their physical boundaries. Subsequently, the NSW Government has released Create NSW: NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework, February 2015.

9. The definition of the Cultural Ribbon provided in *Sustainable Sydney 2030* was sufficiently loose to have allowed the term to be co-opted rather freely. While the uptake of the term is testament to the desire to imprint some conceptual and geographical coherence to culture in a place that seems to lack the more distinct cultural precincts of other international cities, it also demonstrates the need for the City to bring greater clarity and definition to the idea.
10. The landmarks and attractions on the Cultural Ribbon that were identified in *Sustainable Sydney 2030* include:
 - (a) Maritime Museum and Aquarium at Darling Harbour;
 - (b) theatres on Hickson Road;
 - (c) Sydney Dance Company;
 - (d) Bangarra Dance Theatre;
 - (e) Sydney Observatory;
 - (f) Argyle Square and the Argyle Cut in the Rocks;
 - (g) Museum of Contemporary Art, Customs House and the Opera House;
 - (h) Police and Justice Museum;
 - (i) Museum of Sydney;
 - (j) Royal Botanic Gardens;
 - (k) Mitchell Library;
 - (l) The Mint;
 - (m) Hyde Park Barracks;
 - (n) Australian Museum;
 - (o) Art Gallery of NSW; and
 - (p) Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
11. The Cultural Ribbon, as described in *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, is broad in its geographical and conceptual coverage, making it a challenge to set clear tangible actions to materialise the project.
12. It is proposed that in order to bring the project to a sharper focus and to better align the Cultural Ribbon with the Liveable Green Network and the greater Harbour Foreshore Walk, the focus of the project be on destinations and spaces along the harbour foreshore.
13. The Harbour Foreshore Walk, as articulated in the Liveable Green Network, is 17km from Rozelle Bay to Rushcutters Bay.

14. This first iteration of the Cultural Ribbon is proposed to be between the Maritime Museum and Woolloomooloo, which is approximately 9km. Further investigations into extending the Cultural Ribbon can be undertaken in the future following the successful implementation of this proposal.

STRATEGY CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT

15. Since *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, Council has adopted the following related policies that inform the Cultural Ribbon project:
 - (a) Creative City: Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024;
 - (b) City Art: Public Art Strategy 2011;
 - (c) Eora Journey: Recognition in the Public Domain 2012;
 - (d) Legible Sydney: Pedestrian Wayfinding Strategy 2012 and Design Manual 2013;
 - (e) Sydney Lights: Public Domain Design Code 2013;
 - (f) Walking Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2030;
 - (g) Inclusion Action Plan 2014-2017;
 - (h) Harbour Village North Public Domain Plan 2012;
 - (i) City North Public Domain Plan 2015;
 - (j) Tourism Action Plan 2013;
 - (k) OPEN Sydney Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2030;
 - (l) Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan 2014; and
 - (m) Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017.
16. The Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan, City Art Public Art Strategy, Harbour Village North Public Domain Plan, Tourism Actions Plan and Sydney Lights have all identified the Cultural Ribbon project as one that would deliver on the objectives of the policies and plans.
17. Whilst the focus of this work is on the development of the walk along the foreshore, the implementation of the Harbour Village North and City North Public Domain Plans will deliver wider precinct specific improvements, including upgrades to streets such as Hickson Road along Barangaroo, Walsh Bay and Dawes Point, and Alfred Street and Customs House Square.
18. The Cultural Ribbon is one of many City initiatives to strengthen and support cultural activities in the city, some of which are:
 - (a) Live Music and Performance Action Plan;
 - (b) New Ideas for Old Buildings - Creative Spaces and the Built Environment 2016;

- (c) cultural and creative grants and sponsorships (ongoing); and
 - (d) festivals and events sponsorships (ongoing).
19. It is noted that further work is in progress on broader cultural precinct planning. This work is required to be undertaken with the NSW Government, Arts NSW, Infrastructure NSW (INSW) and arts and cultural institutions. Discussions are underway with INSW to commence this dialogue as part of the state's forthcoming Cultural Infrastructure Plan. This dialogue will inform further actions that the City will take to support cultural activities throughout the local government area, outside of the geographical extent of the proposed Cultural Ribbon.
20. While there is extensive foreshore infrastructure already in place, it is recognised that the experience of the foreshore is often disparate, a reflection of the fragmented ownership. Reflecting this mix of ownership, signage along the foreshore route is variable in its messaging and impact, with each authority tending to focus on internal directions within their area of influence. Street furniture and lighting also vary according to ownership.
21. This mix of ownership presents a distinct challenge in realising the potential of the foreshore Cultural Ribbon project as a connective entity and a destination in its own right. Whilst the idea of a Cultural Ribbon resonates with the public, it is not currently promoted as a cultural / tourism experience. The Strategy includes case studies from around the world, including harbour walks of London and Oslo.
22. Whilst most of the land along the Cultural Ribbon is outside the City's jurisdiction, the City has a vital role of coordination, facilitation and leadership to achieve the optimal public domain outcome along the foreshore to benefit all users of the city.
23. With major developments along the Cultural Ribbon, including the redevelopment of Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5 (the Walsh Bay Cultural Precinct), Circular Quay Renewal (Transport for NSW), Opera House upgrades (Sydney Operate House Trust) and the Sydney Modern Project (Art Gallery NSW), it is the opportune time for the City to establish a clear position on the aspirations for the public domain and foreshore that connects these separate projects.
24. The draft Cultural Ribbon Strategy (the Strategy) was prepared by the City following preliminary discussions with external stakeholders. Preparation of the draft Strategy aimed to:
- (a) analyse the Cultural Ribbon as it was sketched out as a project idea in *Sustainable Sydney 2030*;
 - (b) examine the utility of the original concept in light of recent policy work, input from internal and external stakeholders, as well as other development projects currently in train;
 - (c) redefine the Cultural Ribbon idea and provide a strategy to advance the project;
 - (d) illustrate aspects of the Strategy through case studies from Australia and around the world; and
 - (e) identify a series of possible actions for the City of Sydney across the range of policy, programs and projects.

25. The extent of the Cultural Ribbon between Maritime Museum and Woolloomooloo takes in a number of Sydney's eminent cultural institutions and also engages with five harbour bays, four harbour peninsulas, and five harbour-side parks of differing function and landscape quality.
26. The Strategy seeks to build public awareness of a topographically defined entity that is markedly different to the readily identifiable cultural precincts of other major international cities. The Cultural Ribbon walk, as a confluence of nature and culture, is an experience singular to Sydney. The route from Maritime Museum to Woolloomooloo seeks to capitalise upon this confluence of natural and cultural assets.
27. The 9km route also takes in a number of distinctive precincts – Darling Harbour, Barangaroo, Circular Quay, Farm Cove and Woolloomooloo.
28. One of the key identifying features of the Cultural Ribbon, as articulated in *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, is its link with the Eora Journey. The Eora Journey project recognises the ongoing significance and vitality of Aboriginal heritage and culture to the City of Sydney. It was a response to the strong call from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and broader community to celebrate and share the story of the world's oldest living culture through our city's public spaces.
29. In 2012, Council endorsed the Eora Journey: Recognition in the Public Domain Implementation Plan, which included seven project concepts recommended by the International Review of Contemporary Interpretation Practice (Hetti Perkins and Julie Cracknell for City of Sydney). Several of these projects could occur along the Cultural Ribbon, namely:
 - (a) Monument for the Eora (could occur within Harbour precinct);
 - (b) Harbour Walk (Audio Tour); and
 - (c) Eora Journey Walking Trail (Harbour to Redfern).
30. The foreshore experience is also underpinned by the history of Sydney as a maritime city, but is also rich with sites of stories of creativity, spectacle and invention.

PROJECT DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES

31. It is proposed that the walk be redefined as Sydney's nature and culture walk along the harbour foreshore from Maritime Museum to Woolloomooloo with a physical expression that is clear, discreet and simple, based on the following principles:
 - (a) the Cultural Ribbon is about the cultural destinations and landscapes as much as it is about the paths and spaces in between;
 - (b) anchored by moments of storytelling and interpretation including Eora Journey and Sydney's maritime history;
 - (c) a layered experience made up of various components that tell a bigger picture story;
 - (d) it is accessible for all and a great experience every day and at night; and
 - (e) supported by investment by the public and private (including the business community) sector that enhances the experience.

32. To deliver on the above principles, it is important for the Strategy to address the fundamental issues of the physical condition of the public domain of the walk, the opportunities for storytelling and interpretation, and the opportunities to elevate the walk as a destination / attraction in its own right. It is proposed that the Cultural Ribbon is considered under the following three directions:

(a) Connections

- (i) improve the physical amenity of the walk for pedestrians to make it more attractive, accessible and safer for people to explore on foot during the day and at night;
- (ii) improve the legibility of the walk, including enhanced wayfinding;
- (iii) improve conditions and amenities for recreational cycling along the route;
- (iv) Enhance the experience of nature on the foreshore;

(b) Imagination

- (i) bring to the public domain a layer of storytelling and interpretation with digital media and smart technology as an aid;
- (ii) invigorate the paths and spaces ‘in-between’ – make creativity / innovation more visible;

(c) Identity

- (i) to build public recognition of the foreshore route as a destination in its own right; and
- (ii) recognise, retain and, where appropriate, reinforce the existing character and identity of each section of the walk.

33. The Indicative Implementation Plan and Project Budget Allocation (refer Attachment B) proposes a number of key priority projects to implement the proposed actions:

| | Priority Actions | Strategy Alignment | Connectivity | Imagination | Identity |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--|--|-------------|----------|
| HARDWARE | 1 | Improve wayfinding to and along the route | Legible Sydney | ✓ | ✓ |
| | 2 | Conduct walking and accessibility audit and scope upgrade opportunities | Liveable Green Network | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | Walking Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2030 | | |
| | | Scope opportunities to improve the experience of nature on the foreshore | City Operations Program of works | | |
| | | Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan 2014 | | | |
| | 3 | Conduct lighting and safety audit and scope improvements | Sydney Lights Public Domain Design Code | ✓ | ✓ |
| City Operations Program of works | | | | | |

| | Priority Actions | Strategy Alignment | Connectivity | Imagination | Identity |
|-------------|------------------|---|--------------|-------------|----------|
| | | OPEN Sydney Strategy and Action Plan | | | |
| | 4 | Scope cycling amenity improvements | ✓ | | |
| | 5 | Nature and Culture Walk Interpretative Infrastructure | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | City Art (Eora Journey) | | | |
| SOFTWARE | 6 | Nature and Culture Walk: Content Development | | | |
| | 7 | Nature and Culture Walk: Digital media and smart technology development | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | City Art | | | |
| PARTNERSHIP | 8 | Establish a Memorandum of Understanding for a unified vision for the walk | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | 9 | Investigate partnership opportunities to deliver public domain improvements | ✓ | | ✓ |

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030

34. *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 draft Strategy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – Sydney is Australia’s premier destination for international tourists, with tourism a key driver of the local economy. This project will deliver innovative cultural tourism products, which, in turn, will stimulate local economic activity.
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – the harbour foreshore walk is Sydney’s cultural and natural “scenic route.” It passes through sheltered bays and around harbour peninsulas, links the city’s most visited museums and galleries, and passes through both our oldest and newest parks. The Cultural Ribbon will mark the foreshore route, but also spread out from the foreshore to ensure that walkers and cyclists can navigate through the complex of attractions and precincts along the route.
 - (c) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – this project will help achieve better connections to the harbour foreshore, offering greater access to its sequence of open space and creative locations. Creative precincts along the foreshore, such as Walsh Bay, Circular Quay and Woolloomooloo, will be strengthened, with major arts institutions anchoring cultural and supporting activities.

- (d) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – a number of creative, commercial and tourist areas of civic importance lie along the harbour foreshore route. The activation and promotion of the foreshore route will increase visitation to these precincts, stimulating local economies.
- (e) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – this project adopts a broad definition of culture as creativity, encompassing the visual and performing arts, architecture and landscape. The goal of this project is make creativity along the harbour edge more accessible and participatory.
- (f) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – by its very nature and location, the foreshore walk will require close collaboration with a number of agencies and institutions. The success of the project will depend on effective governance and partnerships.

Organisational Impact

- 35. No major organisational impact is anticipated.

Risks

- 36. The success of the project will depend on collaboration with, and buy-in by, external agencies such as Property NSW, Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands Trust, Transport for NSW (TfNSW), and organisations such as Walsh Bay Arts and Commerce, the Sydney Opera House, Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) and Art Gallery of NSW.
- 37. The endorsement of the draft Strategy will enable the City to begin targeted consultation with these organisations.
- 38. In the absence of a strategy for the Cultural Ribbon, the City, in partnership with the broader external stakeholder group (including cultural organisations), would miss the opportunity to demonstrate leadership on a *Sustainable Sydney 2030* project that has been talked about in the media and in various policy documents. The opportunity to provide a comprehensive experience of Sydney's unique foreshore would also be lost.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 39. The Strategy is an opportunity for the City to bring further clarity to the project idea and define its purpose and desired outcomes for Sydneysiders and visitors.
- 40. There is an opportunity for the Cultural Ribbon to bring to the public domain, specifically the foreshore, a layer of interpretation that celebrates the living culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

Economic

- 41. It is anticipated that the additional activation and promotion proposed as part of this project will have a positive impact on visitation to cultural institutions and local businesses catering to visitors and tourists.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 42. The City's Long Term Financial Plan has budget allocations for capital works to implement elements of the Cultural Ribbon.

43. Attachment B provides an indicative project implementation plan and budget allocation.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

44. The proposed route of the Cultural Ribbon cuts across numerous jurisdictions, and the relevant legislation and authorities will apply accordingly.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

45. The public exhibition period of four weeks will commence following Council approval.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

46. Public consultation for the Strategy will build on the extensive consultation conducted for Sustainable Sydney 2030, City Art, Legible Sydney and Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan.
47. During the exhibition period, the City's website will include a webpage with the draft Strategy and key directions for public comment and input.
48. During the exhibition period, the City will commence targeted stakeholder engagement with various key agencies and institutions to include Property NSW, Barangaroo Delivery Authority, TfNSW, INSW, Sydney Ports, Opera House Trust, Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands Trust, MCA, Walsh Bay Arts and Commerce, Art Gallery of NSW and Maritime Museum.

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