

**ITEM 4. REQUEST TO EXTEND ACCOMMODATION GRANT TO AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE EQUALITY****FILE NO: S116523****SUMMARY**

On 27 June 2016, following the mass shooting in Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, Council resolved to reaffirm its support for marriage equality for all Australians and take a number of actions in support of the LGBTIQ community. This included the following grants to Australian Marriage Equality (AME):

- an Accommodation Grant valued at \$36,800 plus GST, for a furnished and fitted out office space on Level 10, 307 Pitt Street, Sydney for the period 15 July 2016 to 30 November 2016; and
- an Accommodation Grant valued at \$14,120 plus GST, for a retail Space at 122 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst for the period 1 August 2016 to 30 November 2016.

For over ten years, AME has campaigned for marriage equality for the LGBTIQ community. AME has focussed on building support for reform across the political, social, professional and religious spectrum. Over 917 organisations, including NGOs, councils and businesses, have signed on to support the campaign. Currently, the campaign is being conducted in the context of a possible plebiscite on marriage equality proposed by the Australian Government.

The Government has confirmed that a plebiscite will go ahead on 11 February 2017, subject to approval by the Parliament. On this basis, AME has requested an extension of their current Accommodation Grants so that they have access to office space and a shopfront to 31 March 2017. In addition, AME has requested a value-in-kind grant for banner pole hire in the lead up to the plebiscite.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the extension of the current Accommodation Grant to Australian Marriage Equality for a furnished and fitted out office space on Level 10, 307 Pitt Street, Sydney, from the present expiry date of 30 November 2016 to a new expiry date of 31 March 2017, which represents a value of up to \$29,440 (exclusive of GST) in forgone market rent;
- (B) Council approve the extension of the current Accommodation Grant to Australian Marriage Equality for a retail space at 122 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, from the present expiry date of 30 November 2016 to a new expiry date of 31 March 2017, which represents a value of up to \$17,650 (exclusive of GST) in forgone market rent;
- (C) Council approve the waiver of banner pole hire fees (subject to availability) to Australian Marriage Equality for use in the two weeks leading up to the plebiscite up to a value of \$24,180 (exclusive of GST); and

- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to amend the current Accommodation Grant agreements with Australian Marriage Equality referred to in clauses (A) and (B).

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The City of Sydney local government area is home to one of Australia's largest populations of LGBTIQ community members and same-sex couples.
2. The Commonwealth Government has confirmed that a plebiscite on marriage equality will go ahead on 11 February 2017, subject to approval by the Parliament. AME has requested an extension of their current Accommodation Grants for the office space on Pitt Street and the shopfront on Oxford Street until 31 March 2017.
3. In addition, AME has requested a grant for banner pole hire for two weeks prior to the plebiscite to support their marriage equality campaign. This represents a value-in-kind grant of up to \$24,180 (exclusive of GST).
4. Should the Commonwealth Government's plan to conduct a plebiscite on marriage equality change, it is likely that AME will make further requests to Council to extend or amend this grant.

**KEY IMPLICATIONS****Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030**

5. *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. This grant is aligned with the following strategic direction and objective:
  - (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – support for the marriage equality campaign is consistent with the City's vision for an equitable, diverse and inclusive community.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

6. The contribution of organisations such as AME is vital to creating vibrant and resilient communities. Supporting marriage equality contributes to ensuring equality and human rights in our community.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

7. This grant request represents an additional value-in-kind amount of up to \$71,270 comprising:
  - (a) \$47,090 plus GST in forgone market rent for Accommodation Grants; and
  - (b) \$24,180 plus GST for waiver of banner pole hire fees.
8. This amount can be accommodated within the City's 2016/17 grant budget.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

9. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

10. The current Accommodation Grants to AME expire on 30 November 2016.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

11. Discussions have been held with Australian Marriage Equality in preparing this report.

**ANN HOBAN**

Director City Life

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