

Item 11

Questions on Notice with Answers

1. City of Sydney Christmas Parties

By Councillor Phelps

Question

Every year, the City of Sydney hosts a series of Christmas parties over the course of November and December.

However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, an invite-only 2020 Christmas Party was delayed until 21 April 2021.

The City also plans to host other delayed Christmas parties in 2021.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. What was the cost of the 2019 Christmas parties, broken down by event?
2. What was the cost of the invite-only Christmas Party on 21 April 2021?
3. Who determined the list of people invited to the Christmas Party?
4. What is the budgeted cost for the upcoming Community Christmas Party on 19 May 2021?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. 2019 Stakeholders Reception – Thursday, 21 November 2019 - \$44,327
2019 Community Reception – Sunday, 1 December 2019 - \$58,766.
2. 2020 Stakeholders Covid Re-Scheduled Reception – Wednesday, 21 April 2021 – \$38,167
3. Guest lists are compiled by suggestions submitted by City of Sydney Directors, which is made up of business and community groups each department has dealt with over the previous 12 months and/or the City has an ongoing relationship with. Councillors are also asked to submit guest names for the Community Reception.
4. It is estimated the costs of the 2020 Community Covid Re-Scheduled Reception on Wednesday, 19 May 2021 will be approximately the same as the 21 April 2021 event as Covid social distancing limits the capacity of the room.

2. **Billboard Advertising at Top of the Town Building, Darlinghurst**

By Councillor Phelps

Question

On 14 November 2020, an 18-storey painted portrait advertisement for the Binge series 'The Undoing' starring Nicole Kidman was completed on the Top of the Town building, Darlinghurst. No Development Application was submitted for this advertisement, and it was taken down on 23 November 2020.

This has been replaced by an equally sizeable advertisement for avocados in this same place.

There are concerns from the local community as to whether DA requirements will be adhered to with this avocado advertisement, and into the future.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. What action was taken by the City of Sydney regarding the Nicole Kidman portrait after it became aware of no DA submission?
2. Was a DA submitted for the current avocado advertisement?
3. If no DA was submitted for the avocado advertisement, what action will the City take?
4. What future action is anticipated if the Top of the Town building continues to allow advertisements without approval from the City?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Please refer to the 14 May 2021 CEO Update.

3. **Electric Vehicle Charging Station Update**

By Councillor Phelps

Question

On 14 December 2020, Council unanimously passed the motion "Removing Barriers to Enable More Electric Vehicles in the City of Sydney". This motion focused partly on embracing infrastructure that accommodates for electric vehicles, stating that "two thirds of motorists point to charging infrastructure as the single greatest barrier to electric vehicle adoption".

The Pyrmont Action Group (PAG) has contacted my office inquiring about the progress for a stronger EV charging station rollout. PAG also mentioned a site desired for a public EV charging station is owned by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and is leased by the City of Sydney.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. What is the general progress update for this EV charging station rollout?

2. What is the progress update in making the property leased by the City a public EV charging station?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Please refer to the 14 May 2021 CEO Update.

4. Office of the Lord Mayor Expenditure

By Councillor Phelps

Question

Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide an itemised list of the Office of the Lord Mayor's expenditure for FY 2020/21 to date?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy approved by Council outlines the support provided by the City to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors. It notes that in 2017 the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal observed the "the role of Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney has significant prominence reflecting the CBD's importance as home to the country's major business centres and public facilities of state and national importance. The Lord Mayor's responsibilities in developing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including other councils, state and federal governments, community and business groups, and the media are considered greater than other mayoral roles in NSW."

Accordingly, under the Policy there is provision for an Office of the Lord Mayor to provide support and related services to the Lord Mayor for the purposes of: policy development and advocacy; strategic planning and research; communications and media; community, government and industry liaison; exercise of civic and ceremonial functions; and administrative support.

Under Council's adopted delegations the Lord Mayor has authority to determine the structure of the Office of the Lord Mayor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the costs being within the annual budget allocated and providing the staffing of the unit does not exceed the equivalent of 22 full time staff (FTE).

The Year to Date 2020/21 expenditure for the Office of the Lord Mayor is as follows:

- Salaries and Wages: \$ 2,147,886 (including employee on costs, superannuation and Workers Compensation Insurance)
- Non Salaries and Wages Related Expenditure: \$53,169 (including event related expenditure for citizenship ceremonies, Christmas events and other civic functions)

The resident population in the City of Sydney has grown from 152,892 in 2004 to 246,343 in 2019. An increase of 93,451 since 2004 (61.1 per cent increase). Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population 2004-2019

The workforce in the City of Sydney grew from 385,421 in 2007 to 501,786 in 2017. An increase of 116,365 (over the ten-year period). (30.2 per cent increase). Source: City of Sydney Floor Space and Employment Survey, 2007 and 2017.

5. Park Upgrade and Street Opening Event Costs

By Councillor Phelps

Question

The City of Sydney's parks and open spaces provide for the diverse recreational needs of our communities.

The City periodically upgrades these parks. Once these upgrades are complete, the City hosts a park upgrade opening event which often includes refreshment and music acts.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide:

3. A list of all of the park upgrade and street opening events since 1 January 2021, including the location of these events?
4. How many council staff are present at each event?
5. What the budgeted cost for each event is?
6. The itemised cost of each park upgrade event including but not limited to staff costs, overtime, entertainment and refreshments?
7. How many more events of this nature are planned between now and 4 September 2021?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Refer to the Key Diary Dates in the CEO Update for park upgrade and street opening events since 1 January 2021.

Council staff working on site range from five to 20 depending on the event.

The combined total budget under Major Project Launches for the 2020/21 financial year is \$380,000. This comprises of 20 events at an average cost of \$19,000 per event. This includes all event costs including permanent salaries, temporary staffing, marketing, entertainment, refreshments, infrastructure, safety management and all production costs.

Park upgrade and street opening event information for the remainder of 2021 is communicated via the Key Diary Dates in the CEO Update.

6. Rubbish Collection in the City of Sydney

By Councillor Phelps

Question

On 1 July 2019, the City of Sydney outsourced its rubbish collection to Cleanaway, a private business.

Since this outsourcing came into effect, Councillors have received an influx of complaints from residents as to the reduced quality of rubbish collection across the local government area.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. How many complaints has council received regarding rubbish collection in the City of Sydney since 1 July 2019?
2. What are the nature of these complaints?
3. How does the City address these complaints?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

After a competitive tender process for the delivery of the Major Services Contract for Waste Collection, Cleanaway commenced on 1 July 2019 the collection of all domestic general and booked bulky household waste services in the north of the City and recycling and garden organics for the whole of the City. Similar contractor arrangements were in place prior to July 2019 with Veolia contracted between 2004 to 2010 and URM contracted between 2010 to 2019 to provide waste collection services.

In November 2019, Council resolved to approve a variation to the contract with Cleanaway to transfer the general and booked bulky household waste services in the south of the City to the contracted service. This variation commenced on 30 March 2020.

From 1 July 2019 to 30 April 2021 total missed services have decreased by 32 per cent. For the same period total tonnages for general (red bin) waste have increased by 2.5 per cent and recycling (yellow bin) by 11 per cent. The number of booked bulky household waste services has increased by 32 per cent for the same period resulting in a 71 per cent increase in bulky household waste tonnages.

Reports of missed collections are made through the City's Customer Service team, either by direct contact or via the City's website. This information is actioned to the contractor for collection of the missed service within 48 hours of the report. Of those reported, 97 per cent of reported missed services are collected within this 48-hour timeframe.

The majority of complaints received in relation to rubbish collection are for missed collections. Reported missed collections are usually a consequence of one of the following:

- Bins are contaminated with an incorrect waste stream and need to be collected separately.
- Bins are in the wrong or a different location or access to a collection point is difficult.
- The resident forgets to put out the bins/collection

Waste Stream	Total No. of Services per month	Average No. of Missed Services per Month	Total No. Services 1 July 2019 to 30 April 2021	Total No. Missed Services 1 July 2019 to 30 April 2021	% of Missed Services to Total No. Services per month 1 July 2019 to 30 April 2021
General (Red Bin) Waste	243,226	437	5,350,972	9,615	0.18%
Recyclables (Yellow Bin)	230,542	316	5,071,924	6,949	0.14%
Organics (Green Bin) Waste	21,216	187	466,752	4,109	0.88%
Booked Bulky Household Waste	<i>Dependant on Bookings</i>	403	111,179	8,861	7.97%
Total			11,000,827	29,534	

7. Tree Felling at Portman Street, Zetland

By Councillor Phelps

Question

On 20 April 2021, workers from the development at Portman Street, Zetland were seen felling a Poplar Tree with a brushtail possum still in residence.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. What is the City's protocol for workers felling trees, if an animal is residing in the tree?
2. Was a member from WIRES contacted on 20 April 2021 in relation to the tree felling at 15 Portman Street?
3. If so, did a member from WIRES appear on the scene?
4. How the City studies the environmental impact of existing habitat trees, and the impact of their removal?
5. How does the City consider techniques for undergrounding wires which could save existing trees and prevent the removal of mature trees?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The City regards every tree removal as an option of last resort and is only considered when there are no other suitable alternatives available. At the commencement of each project, significant effort is invested to analyse the impact of the project on all elements of the environment including the existing flora and fauna. Trees and their health are of key significance in any decision relating to a project.

Tree removal is carried out in consultation with qualified Ecologists. In this instance, tree removal was required to raise the level of the road to mitigate the impacts of flooding in the area.

An Ecologist was present on-site during the Portman Street tree removal. When the possum was spotted in the tree, removal works were suspended to assess the situation in consultation with the project Ecologist. WIRES attended Portman Street on the day. The on-site Ecologist and arborist attempted to safely remove the possum from the tree, however the possum climbed down the tree and headed into Matron Ruby Grant Park. It is important to note that the possum was not injured during this process.

8. Trees at 3 Stirling Street, Camperdown

By Councillor Phelps

Question

In April 2020, Saving Sydney's Trees (SST) and several community members objected to a Development Application (DA) for a new fence at 3 Stirling St Camperdown as it would threaten the viability of the historic and significant Booth Street Fig trees. This DA was approved on 6 April 2020, at the City of Sydney Local Planning Panel meeting.

These trees have a significant heritage status, they are a public amenity, an environmental asset and provide extensive canopy for the street.

An arborist presented to the Planning Panel, stating there would be "catastrophic consequences" if the trees were removed. In response, the panel implemented binding conditions on any works that may negatively impact the trees.

However, community members and SST have observed the initiation of the removal of the Booth Street fence at the expense of these trees.

SST have expressed their concerns that these binding conditions will not be met, and residents have requested further protection for these trees.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. What is the timeline for the removal of the fence?
2. How does council plan to preserve and protect the Booth St trees during these works on the fence?
3. Will the council consider alternative methods of restoring the fence, as proposed by SST, to best protect the trees?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. The Development Application was determined (approved with conditions) on 16 December 2020 by the Local Planning Panel. The applicant is in the process of satisfying the conditions of consent. No works can commence until the applicable conditions have been satisfied. The City do not have a timeline for when works will commence as this is at the discretion of the applicant.
2. Detailed conditions have been imposed on the consent regarding protecting the trees during the works. Refer to the consent on the City website [1431205-13812468.PDF \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Removal of trees will be the last resort and will be assessed and require written approval from the City's Tree Management team to occur.
3. The Local Planning Panel and City staff, through Condition 2 of the consent, have approved the method to restore the fence. There is no mechanism under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 for the City to amend the approved consent.

9. Soil Toxicity in the City of Sydney

By Councillor Scott

Question

1. How regularly does the City test soil on public land for lead and other heavy metals?
2. Other than lead, what heavy metals does the City test for?
3. Where are the results from this testing released?
4. If not released, will the City commit to publishing any and all test results from the last decade on the City's website, to be updated when new testing occurs?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Soil testing is undertaken when a development project is undertaken in one of the City's parks and open spaces (either by the City or by a developer). A suitably qualified and experienced contaminated land consultant is engaged to assess the contamination risks at the site and undertake soil testing. This can include preliminary site investigation, detailed site investigation, remedial action plan and site monitoring.

In some cases, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is established to manage the ongoing risks and issues at a site.

More generally, parks and open spaces are managed in a way that limits human contact with soils where contaminants could be present. Our park design, service levels and maintenance practices include requirements such as good turf and vegetation cover, mulching of garden beds and well maintained paved and hardstand areas.

The City's community gardens are generally designed with raised garden beds filled with clean, imported, nutrient rich soils to reduce any risk of contamination of edible crops and to ensure that the soil is safe to handle during gardening activities. City staff are in contact with Macquarie University regarding participation in their soil testing program for the City's community gardens.

The City Farm which is located on a former landfill in Sydney Park has been developed with the guidance of a site auditor and has included extensive testing, detailed site investigation studies and an Environmental Management Plan.