

## Item 3.1

### Support for the Transgender Community

File No: S051491

#### Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I am proud to say that the City of Sydney is home to the largest LGBTIQ+ community in Australia. While this is mainly due to the pioneering activities of queer activists in the 70s and 80s, I hope it is also because *all* of the diverse members of this community feel truly welcome here.

The City of Sydney aspires to be a vibrant and inclusive city in which its people and communities feel a deep sense of belonging. We want people to feel confident in themselves and connected to their neighbours.

This is why the City recently granted seed funding to Qtopia, a museum that will celebrate the history and culture of the LGBTIQ+ community in Sydney and Australia. We established Equality Green in Prince Alfred Park after people spontaneously gathered there to celebrate the successful outcome of the same-sex marriage referendum, and in 2021, we installed a 90-metre rainbow path to commemorate that special event. Through our grants and sponsorship program, we support numerous LGBTIQ+ organisations and events, including Mardi Gras, the most colourful night in Sydney's social calendar. And next year, we will host WorldPride, the largest event in Sydney since the Olympics.

Yet despite the progress we've made as a society when it comes to celebrating the contributions and achievements of LGBTIQ+ people, too many LGBTIQ+ people regularly experience discrimination and exclusion. This has a devastating impact on their mental health and wellbeing. When it comes to trans people, we know that:

- 8 in 10 trans people have been treated badly because of their gender identity in the past 12 months;
- 8 in 10 trans people have contemplated suicide;
- trans people between the ages of 14 and 25 are fifteen times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population; and
- 1 in 10 trans people have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

Despite these shocking statistics, politicians have recently taken it upon themselves to stigmatise trans and gender diverse people by airing ignorant views about their participation in sport as part of the election campaign. This really is a new low – bullying some of our most vulnerable community members, including children, for the sake of a few headlines.

And unfortunately, trans and gender diverse people, their families and support groups have told us that this ugly debate has led to an increase in harassment and violence against them and undermined their sense of belonging on the sports field. It has also undermined years of investment by local sporting clubs in supporting trans people to play and compete along with everyone else.

In 2019, the Australian Human Rights Commission partnered with Sports Australia and the Coalition of Major Professional and Participation Sports to develop *Guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in sport*. As these Guidelines make clear, sport provides physical, social and mental health benefits, which we are all entitled to enjoy, regardless of our sex or gender.

We must all play our part in supporting vulnerable members of our community when they are targeted by bullies. The City of Sydney has supported the Transgender Day of Remembrance since 2006. All of its facilities have been accredited under ACON's Welcome Here Program, which means our spaces are safe and free from discrimination and prejudice. And we proudly fly the Progress and Rainbow Flags around the City during times of significance to our LGBTIQ+ community. But clearly there is still more work to be done.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay my respects to Davina, an elderly trans woman from Glebe who joined me at Mardi Gras every year until her recent passing. Davina was a loved and loving member of our community. She volunteered in my office over many years when I was the Member for Sydney and Bligh, doing what she could to make life better for others, even though her own life was far from easy. It is incomprehensible to me that anyone would deny Davina – or any trans person – the respect and dignity we all deserve, simply because she was courageous enough to stay true to herself and live a life that was authentically hers.

To trans and gender diverse people across the City of Sydney, I want you to know that we cherish you, and we are proud of the invaluable contribution you have made to our history and culture.

I call on my fellow Councillors to join me in expressing our support for trans and gender diverse people and pledging to do more to ensure they feel safe and included.

## **Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note – with profound sadness – the high mental health, self-harm and suicide rates of trans and gender diverse people as a result of the stigma and discrimination they face, including from Australia's politicians;
- (B) Council support the NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy which lists the actions government service providers must take to ensure all LGBTIQ+ people can access safe, inclusive and responsive healthcare;
- (C) Council commend the efforts of major sporting codes and associations to make sport more inclusive for trans people, including by developing *Guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in sport*;

- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to work with ACON's Transhub, the Gender Centre, Twenty10, Transpride, Equality Australia and other advocacy groups for trans and gender diverse communities to identify how the City can further support trans and gender diverse people, including by:
  - (i) ensuring its facilities are inclusive, and
  - (ii) identifying programs and events to promote the health and wellbeing of trans people and their families, such as the commendable Trans and Gender Diverse Swim Night recently held by Inner West Council; and
- (E) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Prime Minister and NSW Premier to express the City of Sydney's support for treating transgender and gender diverse people with respect and dignity, including when it comes to their inclusion in sport.

**COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE**

Lord Mayor