

Item 3.3

2023 NSW State Election Priorities

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Last year, Council adopted our roadmap for Sydney's future, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision so that we can continue to meet and respond to the challenges of growth, climate change, liveability and social isolation. But we cannot do it alone.

I call on all parties and candidates contesting the 2023 NSW State election in March to commit to working with the City of Sydney on the following priorities to help us achieve our Vision for Sydney, improve liveability and deliver better infrastructure, services and outcomes for communities.

Environment

Our goal is to achieve net zero emissions in the City of Sydney's local area by 2035 which we brought forward from 2040.

The climate challenge can only be met with concerted and collaborative actions. The more we exchange information, knowledge, and experiences, the greater our ability will be to quickly achieve net zero emissions and save the planet for future generations.

Some of the ways the City is taking action include approving of net zero building standards, using 100 per cent renewable electricity for our operations, upgrading our properties and aquatic centres with solar panels and other energy efficiency measures, and developing a strategy for electrification of transport in the City.

To increase our energy independence and resilience, we need the future State Government to:

- Protect people who live in apartments from being locked into long term, costly and unfair 'dirty' energy contracts by developers/owners who install embedded electricity networks.
- Provide financial incentives for homeowners and businesses to switch from gas when appliances reach end of life to green powered electric alternatives as a more affordable way to transition homes over time.
- Incentivise the upgrade of existing apartment buildings to net zero emissions including dedicated support to electrify and integrate EV charging.
- Require all new apartment buildings to operate with net zero emissions by 2035 or sooner.
- Implement minimum house/apartment performance standards for renters to reduce health impacts and rising utility costs from inefficient housing.

- Support NSW councils to deliver the GreenPower campaign developed by the City of Sydney and strongly encourage people to shop around for their energy provider using the Energy Made Easy government comparison site and invest in GreenPower.
- Reduce vehicle emissions by investing in active and public transport, and the transition to electric vehicles.
- Reinvest 100 per cent of the waste levy legislated under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to fund the delivery of priority infrastructure and programs as outlined in the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy.

Housing

Providing safe, secure and affordable housing is an enormous challenge for Sydney – one that needs to be tackled by all levels of government, and the Covid pandemic has only emphasised how much work there is ahead of us. The challenges include caring for our homeless communities, ensuring affordable housing for essential workers, providing housing for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and social housing for low-income tenants.

The City has a target for 12,000 affordable dwellings in the local area by 2036. To date, the City has facilitated the delivery of more than 1,400 affordable dwellings, with another 630 in the development pipeline in areas like Alexandria, Glebe, Redfern and Zetland. We also have planning controls in place that will facilitate around 1,950 affordable homes over the next 15 years.

The State Government can support our efforts and help provide safe and secure housing by:

- Working with the City and Federal Government to maximise the provision of social and affordable housing at Waterloo Social Housing Estate - if we can't get affordable and social housing on publicly owned sites, where are we going to get it?
- Abandoning the Communities Plus housing model where 70 per cent of floor space on government-owned social housing sites is privatised and prioritise investment in new social housing as well as renewing, extending and properly maintaining existing social housing sites with a commitment to significant ongoing funding.
- Providing affordable housing in major precinct renewals such as Central Precinct, Barangaroo, Blackwattle Bay, and North Eveleigh.
- Delivering a minimum 25 per cent of floor space as affordable rental housing on all Government renewal sites.
- Reforming tenancy legislation to end 'no grounds' evictions that allow landlords to evict a tenant without grounds and with limited notice putting profits ahead of the well-being of tenants.
- Providing increased support for Community Housing Providers to build their capacity and to support the delivery of social and affordable housing, which includes services to support vulnerable people.
- Working with all levels of government and specialist services to address homelessness, including by ending youth homelessness and providing support to people on non-resident visas, and those from New Zealand.

We do not want people marginalised and pushed to the metropolitan fringes, dislocated from their community and from the area that has been home, often for generations.

Transport and Infrastructure

Our goal is that by 2030, every resident will be about a 10-minute walk to what they need for daily life and by 2050, nine out of 10 people working in the city centre and two out of three people working in the rest of the local area will commute by public transport, walking or cycling.

We are building a connected cycleway network, widening footpaths and improving public spaces where more people can safely walk and cycle. However, the provision of public transport is primarily a State Government responsibility.

As the inner-city becomes more congested, urgent investment is needed to sustainably improve access for our growing population. Priorities for improving transport and infrastructure are:

- Reducing speed limits to 40 kilometres an hour in all urban areas, and 30 kilometres an hour in village centres with clear road markings.
- Reforming the local traffic committee system so that councils like the City of Sydney with the necessary expertise can implement sensible road engineering and management approaches such as installing new pedestrian crossings, managing traffic signal phasing, changing parking controls, building more cycleways, and setting speed limits.
- Amending the Roads Act 1993 to enable councils to establish a genuinely quick and easy process for approving low risk community street gatherings ('easy streets').
- Accelerating the delivery of mass transit solutions at Green Square, including extension of the metro system to Zetland, light rail or trackless tram services using the Eastern Transit Corridor preserved by the City, and a new '304Z' electric bus route from Green Square to the CBD that is high frequency and operates 24/7.
- Abandoning the proposed Western Distributor Road Network Improvements proposal.
- Continuing to fund and collaborate with the City on completion of the Bike Network and accelerate progress on state-controlled projects such as Bridge Road in Glebe and Oxford Street East that are lagging behind.
- Providing an additional light rail station at Wimbo Park (footings already installed).
- Promoting integrated ticketing, and public and green transport for events at Moore Park.
- Not proceeding with the planned right turn bans on Cleveland Street and work with the City to calm traffic and reduce accidents.
- Ensuring changes to bus services do not reduce access to the west and south east parts of the city and increase ferry services to improve transport options
- Providing barrier-free access across the new Redfern Southern Concourse and a firm commitment to building an active transport bridge across the railway tracks between North and South Eveleigh.

- Bringing forward the refurbishment and restoration of the Glebe Island Bridge for use as a pedestrian and cycling link.
- Working with the City and the community on delivering swimmable harbour sites at Pyrmont and Elizabeth Bay.

Planning and Development

Successive State Governments have gradually diminished the ability of democratically elected councils to make decisions about development that meets the needs and expectations of their communities. As the State Government's planning powers expand, local government and the community becomes increasingly shut out.

Restore transparency and local decision-making by:

- Reinstating planning powers to the City of Sydney Council for the Explorer Street social housing estate in Eveleigh, and for all other social and affordable housing sites in our Local Government Area into the future.
- Prioritising quality built design, the reduction of building defects and improve the process of the Project Remediate scheme to ensure the efficient remediation of combustible cladding.
- Formally refusing Modification 9 for Central Barangaroo and review planning of the site in line with the City of Sydney's needs analysis.
- Following appropriate planning processes by preparing a Stage 1 concept plan for the redevelopment of the former Sydney Fish Markets site at Blackwattle Bay so outstanding issues including noise, air pollution and overshadowing can be resolved as early as possible.
- Ending the selling off of public land to maximise revenue and profit over the public interest
- Early and ongoing engagement with communities on major planning projects with longer time frames for people to provide feedback as part of the formal exhibition process.
- Returning Wentworth Park to the community by creating a publicly accessible open space as part of a larger and enhanced parkland.
- Continuing to collaborate with the City and other stakeholders to progress the development of the Innovation Precinct including at Central Station and North Eveleigh and the upgrade of Broadway from Central to the University of Sydney.
- Providing more equitable access to Moore Park including reconfiguration of Moore Park Golf Course from 18 holes to nine and commit adequate funding to the ongoing rehabilitation of the parklands from years of degradation due to on-grass parking.

First Peoples

The City has a long-standing commitment to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the reconciliation movement. In 2022, Council reaffirmed our support for the Uluru Statement of the Heart and we are willing to work with the new Government to achieve its aspirations.

In November 2020, the City adopted its second Reconciliation Action Plan, the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020-2023. We call on the new Government to ensure that NSW Government agencies continue to work with the City in implementing the Plan.

In particular, I call on the new State Government to progress:

- A national First Peoples National Cultural Centre in Sydney
- The inclusion of culturally appropriate social and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in the Waterloo Estate development.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (Culture is Identity) Bill 2022 that was introduced into the Legislative Council by Fred Nile MLC and co-sponsored by Independents Alex Greenwich MP and Greg Piper MLC and Animal Justice MLCs Mark Pearson and Emma Hurst.

LGBTIQA+ Community

In August 2005, Council unanimously adopted a resolution in support of Sydney's LGBTIQA+ community which endorsed the community's demands for equality, committed the City to working with other government agencies and organisations to end violence and harassment and to continue to support and participate in the community's major events and celebrations.

While much progress has been made over the past 18 years, there is still much to be done. Continued support for our LGBTQAI+ communities can be achieved by:

- Passing important legislation developed by Alex Greenwich MP including:
 - the "Equality Bill" – a comprehensive omnibus bill to address all legislative barriers to LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing.
 - the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 to criminalise harmful conversion practices that aim to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Partnering with the City to fully implement the Oxford Street LGBTIQA+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy that recognises the Oxford Street neighbourhood as the heart of Sydney's LGBTIQA+ community and its importance well beyond Sydney.
- Working with the City to establish a First Peoples Queer Cultural Space and making the former Darlinghurst Police Station available as a permanent home for Qtopia's LGBTIQA+ museum, which will provide the opportunity for Sydney WorldPride 2023 to leave a permanent legacy.

Arts Culture and Creativity

Making space for culture is a major imperative of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The need for urgent action is underpinned by a 2017 survey which found that the City of Sydney Local Government area had lost about 110,000m² of creative and cultural employment space in the previous five years. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet fully known.

The State Government has a significant role to play in increasing cultural and creative space. Opportunities include:

- Ensuring State Government renewal projects protect existing creative employment space and create new spaces such as at North Eveleigh and Tech Central.
- Relocating the Darlinghurst Courthouse so the heritage complex can be used for creative and cultural uses
- Implementing creative land trusts supported by an appropriate legal framework and funding.
- Introducing legislation to enable an Assets of Community Value scheme to operate in NSW that would enable local communities to take ownership of assets that they value similar to what occurs in the United Kingdom under its Localism Act.

Social Reform

The City of Sydney builds social cohesion and combats disadvantage. Yet despite our best efforts, widespread disadvantage persists. Sydney is Australia's least affordable city and homelessness is at unprecedented levels. While unemployment is low, insecure work is high, creating a new class of working poor. And although we have come a long way in our understanding of mental illness and substance abuse, specialist services for treating these conditions are stretched beyond capacity, especially since Covid.

The State Government must better support our most vulnerable community members by:

- Reducing incarceration, including by addressing the sources of disadvantage that lead to, and flow from, incarceration
- Taking immediate action to reduce the harm caused by the proliferation of gambling machines, such as introducing a mandatory cashless gaming card scheme and establishing a Special Commission of Inquiry into Gambling Harm.
- Streamlining funding to community service providers to reduce red tape and time-consuming application processes so they can better support vulnerable groups such as victims of domestic violence, trans people, and people with disabilities etc.
- Addressing food insecurity and sustainable food systems, in line with the recommendations from the 2022 inquiry into food production and supply in NSW.

Financial Sustainability and Governance

Since I became Lord Mayor in 2004, I have made responsible financial management a key priority – a particularly important focus at that time as the City had come close to bankruptcy in the 1990s. Since then, Council has established a consistent track record of planning responsibly for the future, investing in property and assets for better returns, and allocating income to fund infrastructure and services.

Put simply, good governance leads to better and more efficient decisions, helps us meet our legislative responsibilities, and provides an ethical basis for decision-making. The City is continually looking to get better value for money and get socially responsible outcomes for our communities. To do that, the State Government must give Councils the flexibility and autonomy to make decisions in the best interest of their communities.

I call on the new State Government to support the City's financial independence and stability by:

- Committing to withdraw all previously proposed changes under the draft Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Infrastructure Contributions) Bill 2022, and associated changes to regulations and policies that would severely impact all Councils being able to provide adequate infrastructure for our communities.
- Amending the rate peg methodology to prevent future financial shocks.
- Relieving the City of the unique and onerous legislative burden of maintaining the non-resident register under the City of Sydney Act 1988 and giving responsibility for maintaining the register to NSW Electoral Commission, which has the experience and data access to accurately maintain and simplify it.
- Providing councils greater flexibility in the legislation and regulations to undertake more socially responsible procurement, in line with the options already available to State Government agencies and state-owned corporations.
- Amending existing legislation under the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 to enable Councils to recover the cost of the emergency services levy through land rates outside of the rate peg to provide certainty for Council and the community.

These priorities call for greater cooperation between State and local government, which will ultimately benefit our communities. I therefore recommend that Council endorse them and call upon all parties and candidates contesting the 2023 NSW state election to commit to them.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the City of Sydney's 2023 NSW State Election priorities outlined in the subject Lord Mayoral Minute;
- (B) Council call on all parties and candidates contesting the 2023 NSW State Election in March to commit to working with the City of Sydney on those priorities and help us achieve our vision under Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050, adopted by Council last year; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Premier and Leader of the Opposition with a copy of the subject Lord Mayoral Minute requesting their commitment to the City's priorities in the term ahead.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor