

Item 3.3

Congratulations to WorldPride

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

At the beginning of this century people said pixie dust was sprinkled over Sydney for the Olympics. Over 17 days in February and early March the pixie dust returned together with glitter, glamour and rainbows for Sydney WorldPride 2023.

It was a festival with so many highlights: concerts, exhibitions, live theatre, parties, sport, Pride Villages together with the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day and a larger than usual Parade. It attracted around 500,000 participants with 78,000 from outside greater Sydney and culminated with 50,000 people joining the spectacular Pride Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge on Sunday, 5 March 2023.

WorldPride was not just glitter and glamour. A three-day Human Rights Conference addressed the many serious challenges facing LGBTIQ+ people around the world. Australia has made significant strides but there is still work to do. We need to end cruel conversion therapy and discrimination of students and teachers in religious schools, and we need to continue to strive to ensure people can be open and safe. But these are small challenges compared to those faced by many people across the globe. In other parts of the world, the only safe way of being gay, lesbian, trans or non-binary is to be invisible. The risks of ostracism, imprisonment or execution are too great.

As Robyn Kennedy said at the beginning of the Pride Walk, “we march for them”.

WorldPride didn't just happen. It was built of the solid foundations of over five decades of advocacy, activism and community building, which began with the formation of Australia's first gay and lesbian rights organisation, the Campaign Against Moral Persecution, or CAMP in 1970-1971. It needed vision, commitment and hard work to make it a success together with the strong support of all three levels of government, National, State and Local.

The City of Sydney was a proud supporter of the 2019 bid by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd for Sydney to host WorldPride 2023, contributing \$50,000 towards the bid. We rejoiced when Mardi Gras' bid won at Interpride's annual general meeting. In December 2019 Council unanimously agreed to provide \$250,000 towards WorldPride's initial set up costs.

Council unanimously agreed to provide \$500,000 in cash support in June 2021 and in May 2022 endorsed a further \$650,000 value-in-kind support. This was augmented with an additional \$300,000 cash funding to support the beautification and activation of Oxford Street. The City's total cash and in-kind support for WorldPride was \$1.75 million.

In addition to our direct and in-kind support, our grants program funded more than 15 WorldPride community projects with more than \$415,000 in cash funding and \$48,000 venue-in-kind support.

In support of Qtopia's proposal for a permanent LGBTIQ+ museum at the site of the former Darlinghurst Police Station, the City also provided a \$283,500 cash grant and a temporary home for an interim museum for 12 months at the Green Park bandstand in Darlinghurst ready for WorldPride.

City staff across the organisation also provided significant support to facilitate Sydney WorldPride in addition to their other work responsibilities.

WorldPride initiatives led and produced by the City included:

- Murals created by queer artist Amy Blue on the three heritage buildings on Oxford Street's which tell the Strip's story and celebrates its people, places, history and connection to the LGBTQI+ community.
- Still Thriving, a mural by Dylan Mooney on the 'top of town' building on Victoria Street, Darlinghurst.
- A mural designed by Vandal, incorporating the Progress Pride Flag at the front of the Burdekin Hotel at 2 Oxford Street Darlinghurst.
- Liberate! Exhibition at Customs House curated by creative producer Jacqui North which celebrates 45 years of community-led social change.
- Programming of rainbow lights on George Street.
- Participation in the Mardi Gras parade by City staff.
- Rainbow lighting for the Taylor Square fountain.
- LGBTIQ+ street signs in Darlinghurst.
- Pride street signs.
- Rainbow progress Pride banners.
- Installation of a plaque commemorating the '78ers in Taylor Square.
- Repainting of the rainbow crossing on Campbell Street.
- Progress Pride flag artwork on the footpath of George Street.
- Steam cleaning of Oxford street, waste removal and street cleaning throughout the festival period.

The Oxford Street activation grant contributed to decorative decals, façade and shopwindow lighting and festoon lights, LED down lights and moving fixtures for the two day Oxford Street Party to mark the end of WorldPride. Vacant shops were used by InterPride and for a quiet space and First Nations space.

The City also contributed \$240,000 in cash and \$22,000 to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras which provided the core of the WorldPride festival. The City participated in the Mardi Gras Parade for the 18th year with an entry themed 'Oxford Street, you're so sweet'. A vintage ice cream truck led 80 City staff, family and friends dressed in 1950's diner inspired costumes performing a choreographed routine celebrating Oxford Street.

WorldPride will leave many legacies. Preparations for WorldPride also accelerated the implementation of our Oxford Street LGBTQIA+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy, and this work will continue.

At the State level, both major parties gave a bipartisan commitment to banning gay conversion therapy and providing the former Darlinghurst Police Station as a permanent home for Qtopia, Sydney's LGBTQIA+ museum.

The Federal Government made two significant announcements during the Human Rights Conference. A 10 Year National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people was launched. Guided by an LGBTQIA+ Health Advisory Group, it will shape how Australia addresses health disparities and make improvements across the health system. It is backed by a \$26 million investment in health and medical research focusing on LGBTQIA+ communities.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong announced the establishment of a new Inclusion and Equality Fund to support LGBTQIA+ civil society organisations and human rights defenders, international partnerships and networks with initial funding of \$3.5 million. Her Department will also begin work to develop a dedicated LGBTQIA+ human rights engagement strategy which will include bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, development and humanitarian assistance.

The intangible legacy for Sydney is WorldPride's impact on our people: the many volunteers, organisations and businesses who made it possible, the attendees at WorldPride events and the people who became aware that something special was happening.

To quote WorldPride CEO Kate Wickett, "We invited the World, and the world could see the best of Australia and who we are - kind compassionate and caring."

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) commend Sydney WorldPride Ltd and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd on a successful Sydney WorldPride 2023;
- (B) commend and thank the many volunteers, organisations and businesses who contributed to a successful Sydney WorldPride 2023;
- (C) commend and thank City Staff for their work in ensuring a safe and successful Sydney WorldPride 2023;
- (D) commend the NSW Coalition Government and NSW Labor Opposition for their bipartisan support for banning gay conversion therapy and providing the former Darlinghurst Police Station as a permanent home for Qtopia, Sydney's LGBTIQ+ museum and call for a speedy honouring of these commitments; and
- (E) commend the Federal Government on its LGBTIQ+ health and foreign policy initiatives, in the expectation that they will be fully implemented.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor