

Item 10

Questions on Notice with Answers

1. Getiela Park Update

By Councillor Jarrett

At the 26 June 2023 Council meeting, Councillor Jarrett moved a Notice of Motion asking Council to investigate the current operation of Getiela Park Synthetic Sportsfield. This Motion was amended and carried unanimously, calling on the Chief Executive Officer to 'investigate residents' concerns about noise, lighting, fence height, hours of use, after-hours access, and lack of toilets at Getiela, and report back to Council via the CEO Update on actions taken'.

Question

1. In the 29 September 2023 CEO Update, Councillors were advised that the City had agreed to raise the height of the fence on Park Road along the boundary of Getiela Sportsfield to 2.1 metres. Has this occurred?
2. If so, when was this implemented? And if not, when is the City expecting these works to be complete?
3. On numerous occasions residents have requested that the City conduct an acoustic report of the Sportsfield during peak operating hours, has the City conducted an acoustic report or an investigation of a similar nature?
4. If not, why not?

X086666

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The NSW Department of Education School Asset Management Unit are coordinating the work to raise the height of the Getiela sportsfield fence and have advised it will be completed before the commencement of term one 2024 (28 January 2024).

The City does not undertake acoustic testing of its parks and recreation facilities and has no plans to undertake acoustic testing at Getiela sportsfield. The City's after hours call service shows that one to two calls per month were received in the last six months regarding after hours noise at Getiela. The City's security service visits the site three times per night to close and monitor the facility.

Summer usage has decreased by approximately 50 per cent with around 15 hours of bookings per week, compared to 32 hours per week in winter. An Expression of Interest for use in 2024 is currently underway.

2. City of Sydney Legal Fees

By Councillor Jarrett

Question

1. How many in-house lawyers does the City of Sydney employ?
2. What is the total remuneration cost of the City's in-house legal team?
3. How much did the City of Sydney spend on external legal advice in the 2022/23 financial year?
4. What is the rationale for the City of Sydney to request external legal advice in lieu of the City's internal advice?

X086666

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. As at 6 December 2023, there are 20 positions for practising lawyers in the Legal Services unit including Principal Lawyers, Senior Solicitors, Solicitors and a Paralegal. Not all positions are full time and there may be vacancies from time to time.
2. In the 2022/23 financial year total staff expenses in the Legal Services unit, including superannuation and employee on-costs, were \$3,854,733. This includes expenses for support staff.
3. \$1,944,600. \$547,600 in legal expenses were recovered in 2022/23.
4. Staff acting under delegation determine the best approach to provision of legal advice in the circumstances of each request. Factors that are relevant in determining whether to obtain external legal advice or representation in proceedings include availability of internal solicitors, whether a specialised area of law is involved and the urgency of the requirement for advice.

3. Christmas Lights in the City of Sydney

By Councillor Jarrett

Question

1. Has the City of Sydney conducted or considered investigating both the positive and negative impacts decorating our tree canopy with Christmas lights would have on the economy and the environment?
2. If so, what were the outcomes of this investigation? Please include the report. If not, why hasn't the City conducted a report?
3. What is there a policy rationale behind why the City of Sydney does not decorate its tree canopy with Christmas lights during the festive season?

X086666

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The City's arborists and ecologist has reviewed the impacts of decorative lighting being installed in our street and park trees. The Tree Management and Donation Policy, adopted in June 2024, outlines that lights and other decorations are not supported to be installed in our trees. This has been a long-standing policy position with decorative tree lighting also not supported in the Sydney Lights Code. This is due to a combination of factors, including the negative impact:

- to the trees, as lighting in trees needs to take into account that they are living structures and can be damaged by fixing wiring, switches, conduits, transformers and the like.
- attaching lights directly to tree canopies (e.g., bud lights) causes significant ongoing maintenance and tree health issues. The trees are also often damaged during the installation/removal of lights, and from a lack of maintenance to the lights, so as the branches grow the damage increases over time.
- on tree pruning and removal operations, with staff having to arrange removal of the lights first.
- to wildlife, with light interference impacting our native animals including birds, bats and possums.

The best opportunities for lighting trees are from the ground (up lighting) however this needs to be done very carefully and supervised by a qualified arborist to avoid root damage. Other options include attaching lights to nearby structures (such as buildings), which can direct light onto or into a tree canopy. Further, the use of lighting on buildings (like Woolworths) and the light poles along George Street, which are designed as the feature lighting including with pole top decorative lights, provide better opportunities for festive lighting during the Christmas season.

4. Number of Mail Only Parking Spaces in the City of Sydney

By Councillor Gannon

Question

1. How many Mail Only or Australia Post only parking spaces are in the City of Sydney?
2. Have any discussions taken place between Australia Post and the City of Sydney in relation to these parking arrangements?

X086665

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. Based on its most recent parking inventories, the City estimates that out of the almost 45,000 on-street parking spaces in the City of Sydney, approximately 100 parking spaces support Australia Post activities in the City of Sydney. These include full time or part time Mail Zones, and No Parking spaces with an exception for Australia Post vehicles. NSW Road Rules allow other drivers to pick up and drop off in some of these.
2. Discussions with Australia Post generally relate to specific spaces, such as those near public domain and cycleway projects. The City works with Australia Post to identify the best space to support mail pick up and drop off.