

Item 3.5

Creative Land Trust

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City of Sydney has always supported Making Space for Culture in our city. Over the past 10 years we have invested in major new venues and creative workspaces to support culture and creativity, increasing the supply of creative space by more than 6,000 square metres.

This includes the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, Eternity Playhouse, and seven creative live/workspaces and the City of Sydney Creative studios.

However, despite this substantial investment, the City's research demonstrates significant challenges facing the arts, culture, and creative industries.

- Sydney is the only Australian capital city to see a reduction in core creative professionals.
- The average cost of a rental unit in Greater Sydney is the equivalent of 62 per cent of average incomes for creative professionals.
- Light industrial and commercial floorspace used by the Creative Industries in the City of Sydney has reduced by 172,000 square metres since 2012.

To ensure we retain our creatives in Sydney, we need an innovative approach and one that brings together Government and the private sector in partnership. That is why the City and the NSW Government are in discussions to provide seed funding to facilitate the establishment of a Creative Land Trust in Sydney.

A Creative Land Trust is a not-for-profit body that is established to secure land and property for use by the creative industries – spaces like artist studios and rehearsal rooms, but also at-risk music venues and theatres. The Creative Land Trust can maintain properties currently used by artists, musicians and performers in perpetuity, or develop new creative spaces and housing.

These models have been successfully established in the UK and USA and it is time Australia explored this model. Sydney, as the nation's powerhouse of the creative industries, but also the city most impacted by the affordability crisis, is the right city to pioneer this approach.

Establishing a Creative Land Trust in Sydney will be a game changer for the provision of creative space in Sydney. However, given the scale and urgency of the issue we recognise that we need to explore every avenue available to identify opportunities to create more space for culture. This is a greater Sydney issue and to that end we will develop a network of local governments to increase creative spaces across Sydney.

It is proposed that the City and the NSW Government each commit \$250,000 to assess the feasibility of establishing a Creative Land Trust in Sydney with the ability to act independently of government to establish and maintain the types of workspaces needed by creatives in Sydney. The City has funds available from its general contingency to contribute this amount for this purpose.

The City and the NSW Government have agreed that until a Creative Land Trust is established, the Committee for Sydney will act as the independent organisation that will manage the process of undertaking the feasibility study and implementation of the Trust.

As an independent urban policy think tank, supported by more than 150 members from the culture, property, legal, finance, design, education, and government sectors, with a focus on the creative and cultural life of Sydney, the Committee for Sydney is well placed to take on this role.

A steering committee comprising representatives from the City of Sydney, the NSW Government, the Committee for Sydney, and experts selected through an Expression of Interest process will oversee this process and provide recommendations to the Council and Minister for Arts.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note its support for the establishment of an independent not-for-profit Creative Land Trust in Sydney that will have the ability to act independently of government to establish and maintain the types of workspaces and housing needed by creatives in Sydney;
- (B) Council further note that:
 - (i) it is proposed to provide funds to The Committee for Sydney Incorporated ABN 30 332 296 773 to assess the feasibility of establishing a Creative Land Trust in Sydney;
 - (ii) it is proposed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Government (Create NSW) to govern the contributions and actions of the City of Sydney and the NSW Government in relation to the establishment of the Creative Land Trust; and
 - (iii) The Committee for Sydney Incorporated will work with the City of Sydney and the NSW Government when undertaking the feasibility study and implementing its outcomes;
- (C) subject to matched NSW Government support, Council approve the payment of \$250,000 (excluding GST) to be sourced from the 2024/25 General Contingency Fund, to The Committee for Sydney Incorporated ABN 30 332 296 773 to fund and manage the feasibility study and its outcomes;

- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to:
- (i) negotiate, execute and administer the funding agreement to The Committee for Sydney Incorporated;
 - (ii) negotiate, execute and administer any agreements with the NSW Government (Create NSW) required to govern and facilitate the participation of the City of Sydney and the NSW Government in work to progress the establishment of a Creative Land Trust in Sydney;
 - (iii) direct City of Sydney staff to commence consideration of existing building stock, land, or floor space that may be suitable to transfer to a Creative Land Trust, once established; and
 - (iv) direct City of Sydney staff to work with the NSW Government (Create NSW) to set up a Cultural Infrastructure working group, including other Greater Sydney councils, to monitor and increase the supply of creative space in Sydney; and
- (E) Council note that the outcomes of the feasibility study and review of existing assets will be reported back to Council.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor