

Item 3.5

Rainbow Crossing as a Permanent Pride Artwork

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

To celebrate the 35th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in 2013, the City painted a rainbow crossing across Oxford Street at Taylor Square on 19 February. It remained in place until it was removed by the former NSW Roads Minister Duncan Gay without warning in the middle of the night, less than two months later on 10 April.

The Minister cited 'safety' concerns, but an independent safety audit commissioned by the City found no accidents or injuries were caused by the rainbow crossing.

Its removal upset and angered many people, a change.org petition calling on the Government to retain the crossing was signed by over 16,000 people and its removal sparked the "DIY Rainbow" movement.

Since that time, I have lobbied the Government for its return and I am pleased to report that, after years of negotiation between City staff and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), the NSW Roads Minister, Melinda Pavey, has agreed to a new rainbow crossing at the corner of Bourke and Campbell Streets, next to Taylor Square.

This news is significant on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on 24 June 2018 and a powerful acknowledgement of the importance of our LGBTQI community and history.

The crossing will be reviewed after six months by an independent consultant and, if it has proved to be as safe as we hope it will be, then it will be made permanent.

I am excited that we are so close to the outcome we have worked so hard behind the scenes to achieve – the rainbow crossing returned as a permanent pride artwork in Sydney.

Not only will the crossing be a colourful celebration of our LGBTQI community, but the work to install it will also include a local street upgrade to improve amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The existing crossing will be made wider and new smartpoles will be installed with new street lighting and traffic signals. The crossing will be raised to make it safer for pedestrians and it will also provide more space for people cycling across this important part of our bike network. A trial of new sensors will give people walking and cycling as much crossing time as possible, with lights only changing when the sensors detect the arrival of a car.

The work to upgrade the crossing was already in planning by City staff and the current cost estimate is \$128,000 for civil works and \$207,000 for street lighting, including new traffic signals, plus a 30 per cent contingency.

The rainbow line markings will add an extra \$24,000 to the project.

The funds for all the work can be allocated from the existing Capital Works Program budgets. Some operational budget will need to be used for the traffic signalling work, as the assets are not owned by the City.

Once the detailed design is completed, City staff will commission a Road Safety Audit and a Traffic Control Signals Plan for RMS approval.

Residents and businesses in the area will be consulted about the proposal in August before a report will be prepared for the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee's September meeting. Construction on the crossing will start in October and is expected to take three months.

The rainbow will be painted onto the road surface using a hardwearing and non-skid material, similar to the city's bus lane markings – a trial on the material will be undertaken prior to installation.

Rainbow crossings were first installed in West Hollywood in 2012 to promote Gay Pride Month and became a permanent installation to celebrate the city's LGBTQI community and to promote the area as a leading tourist destination. There have been multiple rainbow crossings across Los Angeles, as well as San Francisco, Adelaide, Tel Aviv and London.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) thank NSW Roads Minister, Melinda Pavey, and staff in Roads and Maritime Services and the City for working to return the rainbow crossing back to Taylor Square; and
- (B) endorse the installation of a new rainbow crossing at the corner of Bourke and Campbell Streets, next to Taylor Square.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor