

## Resolution of Council

**13 May 2019**

### Item 11.2

#### Reusable Coffee Cup Scheme

Moved by Councillor Phelps, seconded by Councillor Chung –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) it is estimated that Australians use more than three billion disposable coffee cups each year. Disposable coffee cups are not recyclable due to the plastic lining inside the cup used for waterproofing, forcing these cups to end up in landfill, where they take 50 years to degrade;
- (ii) the council is currently partnered with Responsible Cafes, however, there still exists impediments to using reusable coffee cups that are not solved by this partnership, including:
  - (a) individuals forgetting to wash or bring a reusable cup; and
  - (b) reusable cups are often expensive, which may deter individuals from buying them;
- (iii) Sustainable Sydney 2030 aims to both create “a globally competitive and innovative city” and be “a leading environmental performer”. As the City plans for Sustainable Sydney 2050:
  - (a) piloting a cup exchange program will allow the City to align more closely with this message of sustainability by reducing the amount of waste contributed to landfill, and help the City progress its goal of becoming a zero waste city; and

- (b) with over one million visitors to the City daily, and such an ingrained coffee culture, the City has an opportunity to become a global leader in minimising wasteful consumption to pave the way for sustainable environmental and economic policy;
  - (iv) cup exchange programs, where the council provides businesses with reusable, heat-resistant and dishwasher-safe cups made from recyclable polypropylene which are loaned to the user for a small deposit fee (usually €1 or \$2), which is returned when the cup is returned, have successfully been implemented across various cities in Germany, including Freiburg, Munich and Berlin. In Freiburg, 60 to 70 per cent of the café sector participates in the program and over 26,000 FreiburgCups have been distributed;
  - (v) cup exchange programs have also been tested with success by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in their Sydney and Melbourne offices, and a program is currently being trialled by the Inner West Council; and
  - (vi) implementing a cup exchange program can help save millions of disposable coffee cups from ending up in landfill, and helps to offset the burden on small businesses and cafes (which are the backbone of the City's coffee culture), to provide a 'substantial' discount often expected by customers bringing their own cups; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare a report on the potential for piloting a reusable cup initiative to reduce consumption on single use, disposable coffee cups in the City of Sydney to be distributed to Council. The report should include:
- (i) the potential for a pilot to be limited to a single suburb to allow universal café participation to be achievable in the short term;
  - (ii) local café owners who might be willing to become advocates and assist council in recruiting other businesses;
  - (iii) links to any available business cases or reviews of municipal or city-wide or government-initiated reusable cups schemes; and
  - (iv) given the large proportion of disposable cups that are deposited in domestic waste bins, the potential for such a pilot to be funded through the waste levy or reserve.

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Note – the motion above was not carried. The resolution below, as varied by consent, was carried -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the OECD ranks Australia as one of the most wasteful countries in the developed world;

- (ii) the latest data from the Australian Government's National Waste Report shows that Australia is generating an estimated 67 million tonnes of waste per year – equivalent to 2.7 tonnes per person;
- (iii) the world's oceans are choking with waste, particularly plastic waste from single use, disposable items. The International Energy Agency warns that the total amount of plastic waste in the oceans is likely to more than double by 2030, and then keep getting worse, if action isn't taken now;
- (iv) Australia's waste industry is now in crisis. The Australian senate enquiry on the waste and recycling industry in Australia released in 2018 noted the need for national leadership on establishing a circular economy, introducing mandatory stewardship schemes, and investment in waste avoidance and resource recovery initiatives;
- (v) Australia's National Waste Policy states that the simplest way to manage waste is to create less waste in the first place, and that avoiding waste and reducing the amount of waste generated will reduce pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the pressure on our recycling infrastructure and protect our oceans. It will also curb unsustainable use of virgin resources;
- (vi) the City's Waste Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2030 – *Leave Nothing to Waste* ("the Plan") outlines the City's target to become zero waste by 2030;
- (vii) priority one of the Plan states that the City will advocate for and help the city's businesses and communities to innovate and reduce the impact of waste management;
- (viii) the City has a commitment to continuous improvement when it comes to reducing waste across all of its operations and venues, including events. The City has developed guidelines to assist staff and event managers to find more sustainable alternatives to single use items and has begun delivering information sessions to staff;
- (ix) due to China's National Sword Policy and EPA's restrictions on mixed organic outputs, resource recovery targets within the Plan are becoming increasingly challenging and costly;
- (x) the City is trying to promote waste avoidance across the local government area through its programs and partnerships. The Sustainable Destination Partnership initiated the 'plastic free pledge' which includes removing single use coffee cups. Seventeen partners have signed the pledge so far. The Partnership is holding an 'eliminating single use items' event on 28 May 2019. The CitySwitch program has developed a 'Choose. Reuse' behaviour change toolkit, which includes starting a borrow cup library as one of its actions;
- (xi) it is estimated that Australians use more than a billion disposable coffee cups each year. Disposable coffee cups are frequently not recyclable due to the plastic lining inside the cup used for waterproofing, forcing these cups to end up in landfill, where they take 50 years to degrade;
- (xii) while reusable cups are a growing trend in Australia, the cost of reusable cups is a barrier for some people, and even those who own reusable cups sometimes forget to wash or bring their cups;

- (xiii) cup exchange programs, whereby customers can borrow a reusable cup when they purchase a coffee and can return the cup, unwashed, to any participating café, are one way to tackle this problem; and
  - (xiv) the Inner West Council are currently trialling a cup exchange program;
- (B) that the Lord Mayor:
- (i) in collaboration with other district councils, call on the new Federal Government to include single use plastics in the National Product Stewardship review, and through this mechanism ensure that producers factor in the full economic and environmental costs of single use plastics (including straws, take-away containers, single use cups, and all other packaging) to their operations; and
  - (ii) call on governments to enact legislation that ensures revenue collected through waste levies are reinvested to support circular economy initiatives and waste avoidance; and
- (C) that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) prioritise waste avoidance targets, actions and grant funding in the City's Waste Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2030;
  - (ii) investigate opportunities to collaborate with member councils of the Eastern Economic Corridor on developing a strategy to radically reduce the prevalence of single use plastics, including coffee cups, straws, take away containers and food delivery packaging. The strategy should be developed in collaboration with industry, use all available levers, and incorporate the insights learned from the Inner West Council's cup exchange trial;
  - (iii) work with members of small – medium businesses, the Better Building Partnership, the Sustainable Destination Partnership and other major businesses, events, and government institutions, to identify and reduce major sources of single use plastics in a way that is technology-enabled and measurable;
  - (iv) advocate to the NSW Government, as part of its Circular Economy Policy engagement, that they level the playing field between single use options and convenient circular alternatives, and better enable and financially incentivise innovators that have the expertise and capacity to deliver waste avoidance solutions that will deliver measurable impact at scale; and
  - (v) report these findings back to Council.

Carried unanimously.

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