

Resolution of Council

24 June 2019

Item 13.9

Review of Rate Payer Database Use

Moved by Councillor Phelps, seconded by Councillor Forster –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) that residents and businesses need to be aware of proposed decisions or actions that may affect them;
 - (ii) that local businesses are important stakeholders in and integral members of our local communities and must be part of the community consultation process;
 - (iii) that small businesses are a gap in the City's community consultation process and in many cases are failing to receive notification of decisions that will impact them; and
 - (iv) notifications are, by default, being sent to those on the ratepayer's database and in many situations, not passed onto tenants such as businesses, who are then left out of the community consultation process;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare a report reviewing the City's use of the rate payer database as a proxy for small business. This report should include:
- (i) the feasibility of creating and maintaining a database of small-business tenants within the City's Local Government Area; and
 - (ii) proposed changes to City policy to ensure all occupants are properly notified.

Note – the motion above was not carried. The resolution below was carried –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) that residents and businesses need to be aware of proposed decisions or actions that may affect them;
 - (ii) that local businesses are important stakeholders in and integral members of our local communities and must be part of the community consultation process;
 - (iii) notifications are, by default, being sent to those on the ratepayer's database and in many situations, not passed onto tenants such as businesses;
 - (iv) that as a result some businesses have failed to receive notifications about consultations and decisions that impact them;
 - (v) the Australian Business Register (ABR) records 80,000 plus businesses with an active ABN and registered address in the City of Sydney – however many businesses that are registered in Sydney do not operate here;
 - (vi) the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) suggests there are 60,000 plus businesses actively trading in Sydney – however many businesses that trade here do not occupy property here;
 - (vii) there is no database that separates out the type of businesses that occupy properties in the City (sole traders, partnerships, corporations, franchises, or multiple sub-leases), so to compile a database of small businesses in our Local Government Area, the City would have to do this work, which would be an expensive exercise;
 - (viii) the City conducts a floor space and employment survey (FES) every six years, the survey is observational and based on use, rather than having any consideration of the structure of the entities occupying the space. It does not account for scenarios such as co-working arrangements or where a large company has a multi-entity structure;
 - (ix) the City paid \$176,000 in 2016 for a list of names and addresses of business rated property occupiers as preparation for the non-residential register, but because of privacy and property access issues, this list was not exhaustive. Because there is a high level of churn in City based small businesses, the database would have to be updated quarterly for it to be current and useful;
 - (x) the cost of developing and updating a database of City based small businesses would be prohibitive;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to ensure all occupants in affected areas are properly notified by hand delivering notifications in addition to writing to the owners listed on the ratepayers database.

Carried unanimously.

S129263