

Resolution of Council

19 August 2019

Item 12.12

Metro Theatre Kings Cross

Moved by Councillor Phelps, seconded by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the Metro Theatre (formerly the Minerva Theatre) remains an architectural and cultural icon of the Sydney LGA and has been afforded heritage protection under Clause 5.10 (Heritage conservation) of the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012;
- (ii) on 19 March 2018, Council rejected a Notice of Motion by Councillor Forster to begin negotiations to acquire the Metro Theatre when it went on sale in late 2017;
- (iii) while the Metro Theatre was sold in March 2019 to Abacus Property Group, there is substantial community interest in the future of the property as an entertainment venue;
- (iv) a study commissioned by the City of Sydney following Councillor Phelps' 16 April 2018 Notice of Motion, found the Metro Theatre meets the criteria for State Heritage Significance for its historic, associative, aesthetic and representative values and its rarity. Supported by a letter of support from the Art Deco and Modernism Society of Australia, supporting the nomination;
- (v) re-establishing the Metro Theatre as an entertainment venue would provide the City with the opportunity to:
 - (a) ensure the heritage protection of the building for any future use;
 - (b) drive economic growth and bring investment into the Kings Cross / Potts Point areas; and

city of villages

- (c) provide the Kings Cross / Potts Point community with a much needed entertainment venue; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) investigate the business case for future use of the Metro Theatre as an entertainment and cultural facility and report back findings to Council; and
 - (ii) begin discussions with the NSW Government and relevant private interests regarding the purchase of the Metro Theatre by the NSW Government or City of Sydney and the option of a public private partnership.
-

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

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) the Metro Theatre (formerly the Minerva Theatre) remains an architectural and cultural icon of the Sydney LGA and has been afforded heritage protection under Clause 5.10 (Heritage conservation) of the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012;
 - (ii) the City has submitted a State Heritage nomination for the theatre which is currently being considered by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage;
 - (iii) the theatre is currently not for sale, following its purchase by the Abacus Property Group for \$19.8 million in March 2019;
 - (iv) despite this purchase taking the theatre off the market, a continuing hope remains that the building could be restored as a live theatre due to:
 - (a) the shortage of theatres which meet the needs of independent, professional non-profit and commercial theatre producers;
 - (a) the organic growth of the eastern edge of the city as a theatre precinct comprising several small performance spaces; and
 - (b) its potential contribution to revitalising Kings Cross nightlife;
 - (v) the City of Sydney has long played a major role in providing and increasing performance spaces and live theatre through:
 - (a) the restoration of the Capitol Theatre in the early 1990s;
 - (c) provision and ongoing support of the City Recital Hall in Angel Place;
 - (d) transformation of the former Baptist Tabernacle in Darlinghurst into the Eternity Playhouse, a 200 seat state of the art theatre;
 - (e) retention of the Reg Murphy Hall as the Hayes Theatre, now Australia's leading home of independent music theatre and cabaret;
 - (f) provision of the PACT Theatre for Emerging Artists in Erskineville;

- (g) support for the Sydney Fringe Festival to establish Fringe HQ with multiple small performance spaces in the former World Bar Kings Cross;
 - (h) making City properties available as temporary performances spaces for the Sydney Festival and Sydney Fringe Festival;
 - (i) providing support for independent theatre through the City's grants program, most recently to Redline Productions for improvements to the Old Fitz Theatre in Woolloomooloo;
 - (j) encouraging licenced premises to establish new live performance spaces through incentives in the City's Late Night Development Control Plan;
 - (k) developing mechanisms to make it easier to establish temporary and permanent performance spaces for consideration by Council; and
 - (l) working through ongoing issues relating to availability of creative space, including performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, studios and workshops through the development of the cultural and creative components of Sustainable Sydney 2050; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to continue to work with the NSW Government, the performing arts sector and other relevant stakeholders to:
- (iii) address the shortage of theatres and performance spaces within the City of Sydney; and
 - (iv) support the continued growth of the eastern edge of the city as a theatre precinct.

Carried unanimously.

S129263