

## Resolution of Council

**16 April 2018**

### Item 13.9

#### Public Forums

Moved by Councillor Forster, seconded by Councillor Chung -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 in August 2017 under the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016 provide for a model code of meeting practice (Model Meeting Code) to be prescribed by regulation;
- (ii) the Office of Local Government, in consultation with councils, has prepared a consultation draft of the proposed Model Meeting Code which, once it is finalised, will replace the meeting rules currently prescribed in the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005;
- (iii) the draft Model Meeting Code includes provisions for NSW councils to hold public forums prior to meetings of committees of the council, as well as prior to the council's ordinary meeting, for the purpose of hearing oral submissions from members of the public on items of business to be considered at the meeting;
- (iv) it has been the City's practice only to allow members of the public to address meetings of the committees of Council;
- (v) the City's submission on the draft Model Meeting Code did not support the proposal for public forums before ordinary meetings of Council;
- (vi) the City's submission did support voluntary public forums before submissions on items of business to be considered at the meeting; and

- (vii) other councils across NSW already hold public forums prior to ordinary meetings in order to promote transparency and accountability, broaden avenues for public consultation and assist with to the decision-making process; and
- (B) request the Chief Executive Officer:
- (i) make provision for a public forum to be held prior to each ordinary meeting of Council, in addition to the provision for the public to address meetings of the committees of Council;
  - (ii) establish the rules under which the public forum will operate and advise Councillors via a CEO update; and
  - (iii) introduce the public forum prior to the May ordinary meeting of Council.
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Note. The above motion was not carried. The resolution as follows was carried.

It is resolved that Council note that:

- (A) the City of Sydney has numerous mechanisms which enable the public to participate in Council's decision making process and include:
- (i) public meetings, workshops, drop in sessions and other face to face consultation methods enabling the community to engage directly with Council staff on significant projects and policies;
  - (ii) using discussion papers and option papers to identify issues and possible approaches for public comment and feedback;
  - (iii) placing draft policies, strategies, planning proposals, concept plans and the like on public exhibition for public comment and feedback;
  - (iv) making extensive use of the City's Sydney Your Say website to support public consultation, including the use of tools such as online surveys and feedback forms; and
  - (v) the use of surveys as a way of engaging members of the public who choose not to make use of the City's other consultation mechanisms;
- (B) the City's submission to the draft Model Code of Meeting Practice in relation to public forums stated "support [for] this section remaining voluntary" and noted that "members of the public are able to address Committee meetings at the City of Sydney which provides them with the opportunity to make oral submissions on items of business to be considered at the meeting."
- (C) members of the public have an opportunity to address the relevant Council committee each time a project, program, proposal, policy or strategy is reported to that committee;
- (D) the City's committee process has proved itself over many years as an effective mechanism for the public to have input and raise issues about matters before Council; and

- (E) this existing opportunity for the public to address the meeting of the Committees, one week before Council makes its final decision on matters, also allows sufficient time for Councillors to:
- (i) obtain further information relating to issues or concerns raised; and
  - (ii) give careful consideration to the final form Council's decision on the matter should take.

Motion carried.

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