

Resolution of Council

22 February 2021

Item 13.5

Highlighting the Importance of Urban Agriculture in the City of Sydney

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

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the University of Technology Sydney's 'Sydney Food Futures (2015-2016)' report states that only 20 per cent of Sydney's food comes from within the Sydney basin and the remaining 80 per cent comes from elsewhere, requiring trucks, trains, ships, and planes for transportation, thereby increasing the carbon footprint of the food we consume. We can't rely on this amount of food for our city to come from outside the city;
- (ii) to achieve sustainability, progress the sustainable development goals and create resilient cities, we cannot continue to encroach upon lands that are needed for agriculture, nor can we continue land clearing and deforestation at current rates. In fact, climate action must contain a commitment to reforestation and biodiversity. As such, cities must find ways to feed their populations in sustainable ways;
- (iii) chronic stresses brought about by our changing climate and Covid-19 have shown that our food systems are becoming increasingly vulnerable;
- (iv) the pandemic has shown us that a high level of food insecurity exists within our city. The City, along with its partners, is committed to reducing food insecurity by making sure everyone can access food and groceries;
- (v) findings from the City's 'Community Engagement Insights Report - Planning for Sydney 2050' found that environmental sustainability and management and plants, trees, gardens and urban farming are priority areas respondents want the City to focus on;

- (vi) results from the 'National Pandemic Gardening Survey' conducted by Sustain, the Australian Food Network, found that:
 - (a) thousands of Australians are finding solace, satisfaction, delicious produce and connection to nature by growing their own food under the duress of Covid-19;
 - (b) over 70 per cent of survey respondents said growing food had significantly or greatly improved their mental health, while over 80 per cent said gardening during the pandemic had been very important to them; and
 - (c) respondents said edible gardening was important to food security during the increasingly tough economic conditions, providing access to fresh fruit and vegetables without needing to go to the shops;
 - (vii) the City of Sydney is already in support of urban agriculture projects through its community gardens, footpath and verge gardens, community composting and biodiversity volunteering groups; and
 - (viii) the City of Sydney is becoming a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, a pre-existing initiative signed by 207 cities around the world, to achieve a more sustainable, inclusive, safe and diverse food system; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) investigate opportunities to support the forthcoming Sustain Australia's Urban Agriculture Month to highlight:
 - (a) the City of Sydney signing the Milan Food Policy Pact;
 - (b) the City's existing community gardens; and
 - (c) the City's plans for greater opportunities to increase food security by 2050;
 - (ii) investigate roadblocks and barriers to enabling more urban food production across the Local Government Area including urban agriculture opportunities in new developments, on vacant lands and verges; and
 - (iii) engage in a broader conversation surrounding the City's role in supporting food security via the forthcoming lower house inquiry into food security in NSW being led by the Member of Sydney, Alex Greenwich, MP.

Carried unanimously.

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