

Resolution of Council

11 April 2022

Item 3.2

Support for Qtopia and a Sydney Queer Museum

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Sydney's LGBTIQ+ community has a long and proud history of setting its own priorities and initiating and developing its own projects, including initiatives which celebrate LGBTIQ+ culture and history.

Recognising this, on 17 March 2014, Council resolved:

“... should the GLBTI community develop a viable proposal for a permanent museum, the City of Sydney will support the community in its efforts to achieve this objective, noting that such a museum could only be established and sustained with strong community, State and Federal government financial support.”

A viable proposal is being put forward by an organisation dedicated to this objective.

Qtopia Sydney has been established with the aim of providing a safe and inclusive space that will celebrate, remember, educate and increase awareness of the rich history of our LGBTIQ+ community.

It is guided by Board of five members, assisted by an Advisory Panel. Together, the Board and Advisory Panel comprises people with experience and expertise in newspaper and magazine publishing, marketing, public relations and crisis communication, LGBTIQ+ history and culture, HIV and AIDS education, museum curation, strategic engagement, trans* and First Nations issues. Its Patrons are the former High Court Justice, The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG and publisher and broadcaster, Ita Buttrose AC OBE.

Qtopia's founding members and Advisory Panel have identified four key objectives for Qtopia Sydney:

1. To celebrate, remember and highlight the history of LGBTQIA+ history in Australia through videos, interviews, testimonials and other artefacts associated with this
2. To raise awareness and educate community through engagement programs, school curriculum programs, living treasures and HIV/AIDS awareness
3. To promote and nurture a culture of inclusion through contributing to community education
4. To be financially viable through security of tenure and premises, holistic funding perspective and enabling transition to a permanent space.

Qtopia expects to deliver several benefits through achieving these objectives, including:

- Improved visibility and celebration of LGBTQIA+ history and culture:
- Reduced stigma spaced by LGBTQIA+ people
- Improved access to safe, culturally sensitive and inclusive space
- Enabling educational outcomes.

In developing its proposals, Qtopia has had the support of the Sydney Jewish Museum, gaining an understanding of its financial model, volunteer management system, and education and community engagement programs.

Qtopia proposes establishing an interim museum to operate during Sydney WorldPride 2023 and beyond. This interim museum would test, improve and build support for the museum proposal, leveraging the momentum generated by Sydney WorldPride 2023. It would provide an opportunity for extensive consultation with the LGBTQIA+ communities and identifying potential supporters and volunteers.

Discussions are currently underway with property owners for premises to house the interim museum. It would be welcoming and inclusive space, which would be a forerunner of permanent museum focussed on memory, education and celebration of unique LGBTQIA+ diverse histories.

Qtopia's preferred location for a permanent museum is the former Darlinghurst Police Station at Taylor Square, currently used by NSW Health. While this building contributed to injustices suffered by many LGBTQIA+ people, Qtopia believes that transforming it into a significant LGBTQIA+ community resource will support community healing of past injustices, address past wrongs, and celebrate the community's resilience.

Qtopia representatives outlined their vision to the Chief Executive Officer and me on 18 February 2022, shortly before the Progress Pride Flag was raised at Sydney Town Hall for the first time. Qtopia has subsequently met with the Chief Executive Officer and staff to further outline their proposals. They have supported these discussions by providing their confidential business case to the Chief Executive Officer to consider.

Qtopia is seeking seed funding from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments and the City of Sydney to help realise its initial vision of an interim museum during Sydney WorldPride 2023 and beyond. Qtopia is also seeking the City's support in advocating for the former Darlinghurst Police Station to become the museum's permanent home.

An interim Queer museum during Sydney World Pride 2023 and beyond, followed by a permanent Queer museum at Taylor Square would also address most, if not all of the five priorities of the Draft Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy. It will also help meet the community's demands for more LGBTQIA+ cultural space, expressed during the Oxford Street Cultural and Creative Precinct consultations and the Place Strategy consultations. Moreover, it would complement the draft Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Strategy for Taylor Square.

Crucially, the museum would reaffirm the Oxford Street precinct's pre-eminent position in the Australian LGBTIQ+ community.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Scully –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council support Qtopia Sydney's proposal for a permanent LGBTIQ+ museum in the former Darlinghurst Police Station, preceded by an interim museum in the Oxford Street precinct during Sydney WorldPride 2023 and beyond, as set out in the subject Minute;
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to work with the State and Federal Members for Sydney, the Member for Wentworth and other interested parties to advocate to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to achieve these objectives;
- (C) Council note that Qtopia Sydney is currently investigating options for establishing an interim LGBTIQ+ museum in the Oxford Street area to operate during Sydney WorldPride 2023 and beyond; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) investigate the inclusion of Qtopia Sydney's proposals for a LGBTIQ+ museum in the Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy;
 - (ii) investigate the possibility of making City owned space available on Oxford Street; and
 - (iii) examine the business case provided by Qtopia Sydney with the aim of providing a report to the next meeting of Council with recommendations of options for the City to assist it to advance their proposals.

The Minute, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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