

Resolution of Council

16 May 2022

Item 13.2

City Community Centres

Moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Jarrett –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the Pyrmont Community Centre has since 1993, consistent with Sustainable Sydney 2030 Direction 6 – Vibrant Local Communities and Economies, provided a diverse range of community activities and services, including a library link, children’s’ programs, including after-school care, a gym and two spaces for hire, on the site the former Pyrmont Public school (a community facility since 1884). In the past two years the centre has provided essential support in the COVID crisis;
- (ii) with continuing residential growth since the 1990s, the strong and increasing demand for the existing programs and facilities at the centre has outgrown the centre facilities and space, which was recognised by Council in September 2019 and Council resolution in June 2020 to endorse a project scope and budget for the Pyrmont Community Centre Upgrade, which was further endorsed on 19 July 2021;
- (iii) the Project Scope noted the centre will continue to be operated by the City of Sydney, under the community centre’s operating model supporting increased community participation and providing improved community access, but at a risk that not implementing the scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations;
- (iv) commencement of the works is due to commence in mid/late 2022 and be completed in early 2024, a period of some 70 weeks (approximately one year and five months);
- (v) planning for the upgrade has failed to address or provide for a satisfactory transition which allows continuing provision of the existing community activities and services during the construction period;

- (vi) the Friends of Pymont Centre and other users have since at least mid-2019, and most recently in an email to Councillors dated 19 March 2022 (co-signed by 19 representatives of community groups), expressed their concerns about the need to address the transition period during construction; and
 - (vii) the Friends of Pymont Community Centre have undertaken the identification of alternative spaces in the community that could be rented to enable all the activities to be continued for the duration of the works, however whilst they have considered crowd funding to raise the rent, storage and necessary re-location costs the community needs the financial assistance of Council to meet these expenses and to continue to provide community services during the upgrade works;
- (B) Council further note:
- (i) fees and charges income provides around 23.1 per cent of the City's budgeted income from Continuing Operations for 2021/2022;
 - (ii) Pymont Community Centre provides the City with an annual revenue through gymnasium membership fees and court and venue hire fees; and
 - (iii) if Pymont Community Centre is temporarily closed for 70 weeks during its renovation, the City will lose the revenue provided to it through the centre's activities; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) acknowledge that the members of Pymont Community Group have investigated and identified suitable temporary locations for Pymont Community Centre;
 - (ii) investigate leasing a space in Pymont which can accommodate all the activities and equipment that will not fit at Maybanke Recreation Centre and bring a recommendation to Council which includes an assessment of the financial implications;
 - (iii) provide appropriate support for the re-location of the community centre including assistance with obtaining a lease for the proposed location;
 - (iv) provide funding from the General Contingency Fund to relocate the Pymont Community Centre for the duration of the refurbishment and other funding if necessary for storage of furniture;
 - (v) provide any assistance needed to move the Pymont Community Centre to its new temporary location, including Council support staff;
 - (vi) ensure Council retain the Pymont Community Centre staff – both in the main centre and children's services area;
 - (vii) assist in advertising the new temporary location of the Pymont Community Centre to the residents and community members of the Pymont area to ensure that they understand the change in location and are aware of the continuation of the operation of the centre in a new venue;

- (viii) work with the community, including Friends of Pymont Community Centre and Pymont Cares, to enact these recommendations for the term of the closure of the Pymont Community Centre;
- (ix) provide assurance to the Friends of Pymont Community that they will be able to return to the refurbished centre with a full range of activities at the completion of the works;
- (x) ensure that community re-location/displacement plans are included in all future scope of works for all community centres upgrades; and
- (xi) report back to Councillors via the 10 June 2022 CEO Update of the action taken to address the relocation of the Pymont Community Centre to its new temporary location, including the rental grant and assistance provided to assist in the upkeep and maintenance of the services and activities offered through the Pymont Community Centre.

A show of hands on the motion resulted in an equality of voting as follows –

Ayes (5) Councillors Ellsmore, Gannon, Jarrett, Scott and Weldon

Noes (5) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Chan, Davis, Kok and Scully.

The Lord Mayor exercised her casting vote against the motion.

The motion was declared lost.

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