

Resolution of Council

31 October 2022

Item 13.3

Council Commits to Install Refugees Are Welcome Banners at Town Hall and at Other Key Locations

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Scott -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) that the City of Sydney has been a Refugee Welcome Zone since 2005;
- (ii) that Council currently undertakes a wide range of activities and programs to welcome and support refugees and asylum seekers, and to make the City more accessible to refugees and people seeking asylum. This includes through Refugee Week, subsidised fees to city-owned facilities, and training and employment opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum;
- (iii) that refugees and people seeking asylum have been subjected to unimaginably cruel and arbitrary policies in Australia for decades;
- (iv) that currently, there are 89.3 million people worldwide that are forcibly displaced. Australia's annual refugee intake remains low compared to other countries, and has not been increased by the current Federal Government;
- (v) that, in recent weeks, the Federal Government has sent a letter to many temporary visa holders, including people seeking asylum, informing them that they will "never be resettled in Australia, and that they must apply to settle in New Zealand"; and

- (vi) that, on 24 October 2022, City of Sydney Councillors and other local council delegates attending the Local Government NSW annual conference unanimously supported a motion that Local Government NSW: “[call] on the NSW Government to work with the Australian Government to expeditiously transition refugees on Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to Permanent Protection Visas to safeguard the health and wellbeing of these ‘temporary’ refugees and enable them to continue to contribute to the economic and social fabric of the communities they have chosen to call home”;
- (B) Council also note:
- (i) that Council has previously displayed ‘Refugees Are Welcome’ banners during Refugee Week, and throughout the year in selected locations; and
 - (ii) that Council has received 16 letters of support from organisations and refugee advocates requesting that ‘Refugees are Welcome’ banners be displayed prominently in front of Sydney Town Hall;
- (C) Council commit to the creation of banners or signage stating that ‘Refugees are Welcome’ (or equivalent) which can be prominently displayed at the Sydney Town Hall and other key locations within the City of Sydney, to send a resounding message of acceptance to refugees and people seeking asylum; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) investigate options to display prominent ‘Refugees are Welcome’ signage at the Sydney Town Hall and other prominent locations, including options:
 - (a) for a ‘Refugees Are Welcome’ banner to be created and hung across the front façade of Sydney Town Hall; and
 - (b) for one or more ‘Refugees are Welcome’ pull-up banners which would be prominently visible from George Street if placed on the Sydney Town Hall steps;
 - (ii) provide advice about opportunities and costs to create the banners or signage, including if the Council were to commission or collaborate with a refugee or asylum seeker artist or organisation to design the banners or signage; and
 - (iii) provide a report back to Council.

Carried unanimously.

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