

Resolution of Council

23 October 2023

Item 10.9

Vale John Fowler

Moved by Councillor Weldon, seconded by Councillor Worling –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the recent passing of John William Fowler;
- (ii) John lived a rich life marked by compassion, resilience, and a commitment to community. He served as a Councillor and Mayor of South Sydney Council prior to the forced merge with the City of Sydney in 2004 and he was a treasured member of the local community;
- (iii) born in 1954, John spent his early years in Wallacia where his family ran the post office and telephone exchange. After finishing high school, he completed an arts degree and a teaching qualification. Drawing on a love of literature and learning, John taught at Punchbowl Boys High and at Intensive English Centres in Marrickville and Surry Hills;
- (iv) John was elected as an independent Councillor for South Sydney Council in 1989. In this role, John was a passionate advocate for transparency and community representation. He was an outspoken critic of partisan local government and in 2000, with the support of a group of independents, he became the first and only non-Labor Mayor in the Council's history;
- (v) John was also the state's first openly gay Mayor and he played a pivotal role in history by leading the first Australian Council to formally recognise gay and lesbian relationships. John's personal advocacy and open support fostered an environment of acceptance and inclusion and his unwavering commitment to equality made a lasting impact on the lives of many within the queer community; and

- (vi) fond memories from friends and family speak of his unique character. His impact was felt not only in the political sphere but also in personal relationships marked by loyalty and enduring friendship. John is survived by his elder brother Ross and he was a much-loved uncle to John, Gordon, and Alison and their children;
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to John's family expressing Council's condolences; and
- (C) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of John William Fowler.

Carried unanimously.

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