

Resolution of Council

20 November 2023

Item 15.6

Bring Joy Back Home

The original motion was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Ellsmore.

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) East Sydney's statue of Joy was the world's first statue of a sex worker, acting as a tribute to our City's working women and the history of East Sydney;
- (ii) NSW was the world's first jurisdiction to decriminalise sex work, under former NSW Labor Premier Bob Carr, allowing for stronger health and safety outcomes for professionals in the sex work industry and protecting against illegal sex trafficking;
- (iii) the former South Sydney Council led reforms and regulations to ensure planning compliance for sex work premises, leading the world in creating safer, legal working environments for sex workers;
- (iv) the statue of Joy, sculpted by artist Loui Fraser, was located on the corner of Stanley and Yurong Street in Darlinghurst for 18 months, from 1995;
- (v) the proposal to install the statue was contentious, and was approved initially as a 12 month trial by one vote by former South Sydney Council the trial was extended after the statue was vandalised;
- (vi) once installed, the statue continued to be contentious and divisive, with residents, including those of a nearby retirement home, petitioning Council to remove it, while other residents supported it;
- (vii) in April 1997, Joy was relocated to Macquarie University where the statue it is now part of the permanent collection of the University's Sculpture Park, however, the University supports a version of the statue being reinstated in Darlinghurst; and

- (viii) artist Loui Fraser, Macquarie University, local residents, businesses and services including Vincentian House have indicated their overwhelming support to bring the statue of Joy back to Stanley and Yurong Street, with nearly 400 local residents signing a petition to support the move; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) investigate acquiring the original statue of “Joy” from Macquarie University to be reinstated at the corner of Yurong and Stanley Streets, East Sydney;
 - (ii) consult the City’s local East Sydney community and Public Art Advisory Panel on reinstating the statue of “Joy” or a replica to Stanley Street and Yurong Street; and
 - (iii) report back to Council with the outcomes of the consultation and the advice of the Public Art Advisory Panel and options to bring “Joy” or a replica back to East Sydney.

The amended motion was carried unanimously.

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