

Resolution of Council

24 June 2024

Item 3.4

20th Anniversary of REDWatch

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

On 16 May 2004, REDWatch members convened their first meeting in response to community concerns about issues around The Block and subsequent NSW Government plans for Redfern and Waterloo.

Twenty years on, REDWatch continues to provide essential support and advocacy for the communities of Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo.

I want to acknowledge the work of REDWatch volunteers and how much we appreciate the ongoing collaboration between our organisations. Through monthly meetings, detailed e-newsletter updates and its website, REDWatch has played a major role in keeping the community updated and helping residents engage with key agencies on issues that affect them.

City of Sydney staff and I have worked with REDWatch, to achieve important outcomes for the community, in particular for public housing tenants, and to advocate for improvements to development on State-owned land. The City works closely with REDWatch to make sure the local community is informed by presenting at forums and sharing our expertise and resources with the group. We also work with REDWatch to ensure that the needs of the community are reflected in our own advocacy and submissions to the NSW Government.

While a Member of Parliament, I asked many questions in Parliament, tabled petitions, moved amendments and regularly spoke on behalf of the Redfern and Waterloo community in response to government legislation.

For example, in 2012 I lobbied the NSW Government to immediately install lifts at Redfern Station – a decade later the community finally has a more accessible station with free community access across the Southern Concourse. However, we are all still waiting for the additional active transport link across the railway tracks to truly connect North and South Eveleigh.

The City and REDWatch have collaborated over the years to protect public space, access and heritage. This includes campaigns around the Australian Technology Park, Explorer Street Eveleigh, the Paint Shop sub-precinct and the Large Erecting Shed.

Most notably, the City has worked with the community to improve the NSW Government's plans for the renewal of Waterloo Estate. We were successful in getting a significantly larger main park outside the Metro Station and in Waterloo South we successfully advocated for 50 per cent Social and Affordable Housing in Waterloo South with better built form outcomes including fewer and lower buildings.

REDWatch has always been highly engaged in the NSW Government's plans, including those for the redevelopment of Waterloo Estate. For years, the Waterloo community has been concerned about the future of their neighbourhood and their homes, but REDWatch has provided stable support and has been a strong advocate and a source of truth.

REDWatch has been an active member of the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative, alongside the City and other key agencies. They are assisting with engagement, planning and coordinated responses to the Waterloo community in advance of the redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the community. Without REDWatch's vehement commitment to the social housing residents living within the buildings, we would not have a People and Place Framework for Waterloo South.

On behalf the City of Sydney, I thank the volunteers who have kept REDWatch active over the past two decades who have given their time to support and advocate for the community, most notably long-standing REDWatch spokesperson, Geoff Turnbull.

I invite Councillors to join me in congratulating REDWatch on their 20th anniversary and commend the group's achievements during this time.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the City and REDWatch's ongoing collaboration in advocating for better outcomes for the community;
- (B) Council congratulate REDWatch, its spokesperson Geoff Turnbull and all its members and volunteers for their 20 years of service to the community; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to REDWatch to congratulate the group on their 20th anniversary and thank REDWatch volunteers for their support and dedication to the communities of Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Ellsmore –

That the Minute by the Lord Mayor be endorsed and adopted.

Carried unanimously.

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Note – all Councillors, staff and members of the public present acknowledged the anniversary of REDWatch by round of applause.