

Resolution of Council

25 August 2025

Item 13.1

Hey, Get Out of Our Garden

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

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the City's Greening Sydney Strategy aims to deliver "greenery at every doorstep" with more 1.2 million new shrubs and grasses and 17,500 new trees planted in City parks and streets since 2004; and
- (ii) footpath gardens are part of our grassroots response to climate change, they help to cool our urban environment and reduce heat effects. They beautify our streets and create a pleasant and attractive environment;

(B) Council note however:

- (i) our footpath gardens are being damaged and trampled by pedestrians seeking out a quick short cut or simply not paying attention to where they are walking;
- (ii) every time a footpath garden is knowingly or unknowingly damaged by a resident in our community the impact is far-reaching. From the City maintenance workers who must engage in the process of repair and replanting, to the neighbourhood who must endure a barren garden and the overall lack of sustainability that comes with having to re-plant;
- (iii) in some cases, we have seen corners of footpath gardens that have become completely barren due to pedestrian access onto these areas;
- (iv) it makes sense to protect our footpath gardens, in doing so we will ease the burden of resident complaints to City for repairs and replanting of damaged gardens and reduce the frequency of plants dying and needing to be replaced; and

- (v) constant damage to our footpath gardens undermines the City's work and commitment to the upkeep and maintenance of our footpath gardens across the 78,219 square metres of landscaping throughout the City's streets;

(C) Council further note that:

- (i) currently, protective fencing is used in some high-pedestrian traffic locations, and where new gardens are establishing:
 - (a) the rejuvenation of Crown Street in Surry Hills saw several protective fences being installed to assist the regrowth of damaged kerbside gardens, which can now be enjoyed by all; and
 - (b) in areas of high pedestrian traffic, Councillor Worling has advocated for low fencing to be installed around garden beds. These have been installed on Macleay Street in Potts Point allowing the community to enjoy the gardens and preventing further damage;
- (ii) more interventions are needed:
 - (a) where protective fencing is used, gardens flourish and thrive. They are more sustainable and do not require the attention associated with replanting;
 - (b) the protection of existing footpath gardens will play a role in helping the City achieve 40% green cover by 2050. It will help our streets look their best and will also avoid the timely and costly of replanting; and
 - (c) consider the "desire line" (a path created by both humans and animals to reach the most easily navigated route from origin to destination) in the future design of all footpath gardens;
- (iii) protecting our gardens in high traffic areas will become even more important as more people live and work in our city:
 - (a) every day 1.3 million people are in the City of Sydney local area. From residents, workers and visitors to people studying, doing business, and shopping and dining. On top of that, there are over 32,820 dogs registered and living in the City. All those feet and paws pose a risk to our footpath gardens; and
 - (b) our residential population is currently 232,438 and expected to increase to over 304,000 by 2046. With increased pedestrian traffic damage to our footpath garden beds can be expected to intensify; and

- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate and report back via the CEO Update on the resources and time needed to:
- (i) install protective fencing around footpath gardens in high pedestrian traffic areas;
 - (ii) rejuvenate damaged and neglected corners of footpath garden beds; and
 - (iii) consider how the “desire line” can be integrated into the design of new and future footpath garden beds.

Carried unanimously.

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