

Resolution of Council

23 February 2026

Item 12.5

Advancing Our National Anthem Practice

Moved by Councillor Maxwell, seconded by Councillor Arkins –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) that “Advance Australia Fair” contains 2 official verses, as recognised in the Australian National Anthem protocols administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- (ii) that the second verse is included in Our Common Bond, the official citizenship test resource, and is material that prospective citizens may be examined on, despite it rarely being sung at public events;
- (iii) that the second verse contains inspiring sentiments about unity, shared endeavour and contributing to the common good, welcoming peoples from ‘across the seas’. These themes speak to contemporary Australia and are consistent with the values of the City of Sydney;
- (iv) that the anthem has undergone several revisions throughout its history to reflect Australia’s evolving national identity, most recently updating the wording ‘young and free’, to ‘one and free’.
- (v) greater public familiarity with the second verse can support civic literacy by improving understanding of this evolution, and strengthen a sense of public affinity with its positive sentiments about our national identity; and
- (vi) that the City of Sydney holds significant civic ceremonies, including citizenship ceremonies and adopts thoughtful and inclusive ceremonial practice by appropriately incorporating the second verse of the national anthem;

- (B) Council endorse the following motion for submission to the 2026 Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly:

This National General Assembly requests the Australian Government to update national protocols to encourage the use of the second verse of the national anthem at federal, state and local civic ceremonies, and outline steps to improve public familiarity with both verses and asks the Governor-General to support the promotion of the second verse as part of national civic practice, acknowledging the role of the Commonwealth in proclaiming and stewarding the anthem.

- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the President of Local Government NSW about encouraging councils to use the second verse of the national anthem at local civic ceremonies, and outline steps to improve public familiarity with both verses.

The motion was carried on the following show of hands –

Ayes (6) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Arkins, Gannon, Kok, Maxwell and Worling

Noes (4) Councillors Ellsmore, Miller, Thompson and Weldon*

Carried.

*Note – Councillor Weldon abstained from voting on this matter. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 11.4 of the Code of Meeting Practice, Councillor Weldon is taken to have voted against the motion.

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