

Resolution of Council

11 March 2019

Item 13.1

Declaration of Cities Coalition for Digital Rights

Moved by Councillor Scully, seconded by Councillor Miller -

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) vast amounts of our lives now take place online, including paid employment, participating in democracy and communicating with government and with each other. As such, it is crucial that we take steps to enhance, support and promote the digital rights of our community;
 - (ii) the Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2017 notes that while online participation is increasing across Australia, people with low levels of income, education and employment, along with older Australians, people with a disability, and people in regional areas are the most significantly digitally excluded;
 - (iii) the City of Sydney Digital Strategy outlines a number of strategic priorities, including digital inclusion, use of technology to enable participation in the democratic process and ethical innovation in the information marketplace; and
 - (iv) on 14 November 2018, Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York City formally launched the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, a joint initiative to protect digital rights on a global level;
- (B) protection of the digital public realm be incorporated as a key principle in Sustainable Sydney 2050. This means continuing to implement the priorities outlined in the Digital Strategy and developing a strategy for the future which anticipates the complex and changing implications of digital participation, and the capacity for technology to be used to both aid and hinder human flourishing, autonomy and agency; and

- (C) the City of Sydney become a signatory of the Declaration of Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, which states that:

"We, the undersigned cities, formally come together to form the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, to protect and uphold human rights on the internet at the local and global level";

The internet has become inseparable from our daily lives. Yet, every day, there are new cases of digital rights abuse, misuse and misinformation and concentration of power around the world: freedom of expression being censored; personal information, including our movements and communications, monitored, being shared and sold without consent; 'black box' algorithms being used to make unaccountable decisions; social media being used as a tool of harassment and hate speech; and democratic processes and public opinion being undermined;

As cities, the closest democratic institutions to the people, we are committed to eliminating impediments to harnessing technological opportunities that improve the lives of our constituents, and to providing trustworthy and secure digital services and infrastructures that support our communities. We strongly believe that human rights principles such as privacy, freedom of expression, and democracy must be incorporated by design into digital platforms starting with locally-controlled digital infrastructures and services; and

As a coalition, and with the support of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), we will share best practices, learn from each other's challenges and successes, and coordinate common initiatives and actions. Inspired by the Internet Rights and Principles Coalition (IRPC), the work of 300 international stakeholders over the past ten years, we are committed to the following five evolving principles:

1. Universal and equal access to the internet, and digital literacy;
2. Privacy, data protection and security;
3. Transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination of data, content and algorithm;
4. Participatory democracy, diversity and inclusion; and
5. Open and ethical digital service standards."

Carried unanimously.

S129264