

Item 12.2

Notices of Motion

Urban Billabongs and Additional Water Play Areas

By Councillor Weldon

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) there is significant community interest in open and free swimming areas, demonstrated by the popularity of the new harbourside swimming area at Marrinawi Cove and the water play areas at Tumbalong and Pirrama Parks;
- (ii) with climate change increasing the frequency and severity of extreme heat events, accessible public spaces to cool off in summer are vital for community safety and wellbeing;
- (iii) there is a growing national and global trend for incorporating open and free swimming areas, splash pools, and water play areas into public space design to promote cooling and to enhance liveability;
- (iv) the City of Sydney is committed to providing more opportunities for casual swimming, in addition to operating 6 high-quality and well-utilised public lap pools and aquatic centres;
- (v) this includes working with Sydney Water to restore local waterways and improve water quality, with the long-term aspiration of creating more locations for safe harbour swimming, as identified within Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050; and
- (vi) making the harbour swimmable will require a whole of government approach. Given the age of pipes in the inner city, and pollution levels from past industrial uses, fixing water quality will require significant investment by Sydney Water and the NSW Government;

(B) Council also note:

- (i) urban billabongs are shallow man-made lagoons designed to provide a safe and accessible place for people of all ages to take a quick dip and cool off in summer;
- (ii) urban billabongs could be integrated with the restoration of Sydney's waterways by tracing historic routes, using natural filtration and implementing Aboriginal-led design principles that recognise the cultural and ecological significance of these places – a priority aspiration of the City's First Peoples Dialogue Forum in 2019; and
- (iii) the concept could also allow for water to be drained in cooler months to support other community uses, including as a gathering space and a site for cultural activations and community events;

- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate the inclusion of urban billabongs and/or water play areas as part of designs for the future parks and public spaces within the City of Sydney, including Wentworth Park. Investigations should include:
- (i) site suitability and proximity to other pools and harbour swimming locations;
 - (ii) the cost of design, construction and ongoing operations;
 - (iii) public safety and accessibility requirements; and
 - (iv) the role of these facilities as local heat refuges and their contribution to reducing the urban heat island effect; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to include the potential provision of urban billabongs and additional water play areas in the upcoming Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs review.

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