

Item 3.1

Enabling Community Activities

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City's Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan – *A city for all: a socially just and resilient Sydney*, provides a roadmap for a socially just and resilient Sydney, one that is characterised by supportive social networks and trust, a sense of belonging and connection to place, harmony and social cohesion, diverse thriving communities, vibrant creative life, and accessible places and spaces.

Community facilities

Our community facilities make a critical contribution to our commitment to sustaining Sydney as a city for all. By bringing people together, they are essential infrastructure for enhancing community resilience, helping us realise the objectives of *Resilient Sydney: A strategy for city resilience 2018*.

The City of Sydney has an extensive portfolio of community venues, including libraries, community and town halls, neighbourhood centres, and auditoria that are available for hire by community groups and individual residents.

Across our local government area, we have 35 venues for hire with a total of 74 bookable spaces.

We are right to be proud of the facilities in our local government area – our commitment over the past 15 years to design excellence means we have created iconic and award-winning venues like the Surry Hills Library, Green Square Library, and the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre.

These new venues complement our venues for hire, which include Sydney Town Hall, Paddington Town Hall, Glebe Town Hall and Customs House.

We create and maintain these venues to support and enhance community engagement, resilience and social cohesion. And it is the people that use them and City staff that support them which makes the real difference in the lives of many of our residents. This was highlighted at the Sustainable Sydney 2050 Roundtable on social cohesion that I hosted with community leaders on 29 August 2019.

The City acknowledges the importance of local not-for-profit and community groups made up of volunteers who have limited access to funding and infrastructure. In many instances, individuals have been involved in these groups over a long period, generously giving their time and resources to contribute to and improve their communities.

In this context, our community facilities can be critical to the continued, effective contribution of these groups and participation by individuals. So the City needs to:

- ensure that the groups and individuals who provide these services know that our facilities are available for hire and can be used for meetings and events;
- ensure venue information including accessibility, booking processes, amenities and hire conditions are easy to find, straightforward and in formats that are user-friendly; and
- make sure that our venues, especially unstaffed venues, are easy to access and available to the whole community.

I want to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by individuals who volunteer their time and effort to not-for-profit and community groups to provide services in response to identified needs.

I also want to recognise the important work of our City staff, who manage and operate these venues and the role they perform supporting our local communities.

City support for events that bring the community together

In addition to our venues and facilities, the City has a network of parks and open spaces that can operate as outdoor venues, facilitating community art and sporting events, markets and social get-togethers in addition to their traditional uses.

Community-led events – for example, residents in a local street organising a Halloween ‘trick or treat’, should be encouraged wherever possible, and the City should look at ways to help communities plan and undertake these types of events.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to review and propose strategies to improve community awareness of the City's community facilities for hire, including targeted marketing to appropriate community groups, provision of online virtual venue tours, and improved online information regarding venue amenities, including venue accessibility features; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate:
 - (i) reviewing requirements for hire of community venues with a view to streamlining and simplifying processes to increase facility usage by not-for-profit and community groups and individuals providing services to the city's growing community;
 - (ii) enhancing the assistance the City can provide to community-led events; and
 - (iii) working with the State Government to support and remove barriers to communities hosting events in local streets.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor