

Item 3.1

Banning the Sale of Fur and Exotic Animal Skin on Council Land

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Several reports have highlighted the animal cruelty that occurs during the production of fur in other countries. Animals are being kept in small cages unable to act out their natural behaviours, after which they are killed in harrowing ways including electrocution, bludgeoning or being skinned alive.

Increased awareness of this cruelty has reduced consumer demand for fur products, but recent exposés have shown that some producers and vendors are now mislabelling fur products as 'fake fur'. Forensic tests on products labelled as fake fur, including on clothing and fluffy toys sold at the Queen Victoria and South Melbourne markets, showed the products were made from racoon and racoon dog fur – animals known to be mistreated in fur harvesting facilities in China.

Similarly, the trade in exotic animal skins, such as snakes, alligators, crocodiles and other reptiles is cruel and has significant negative environmental impacts, with wild animals removed from their native habitat and harvested for skins.

These revelations have upset many people, including politicians. In Victoria, Animal Justice MP and key crossbencher Andy Meddick recently introduced a motion that the Victorian government passed to create a fur taskforce to investigate the mislabelling of fur products.

While stamping out the trade in fur and exotic animal skins requires State and Federal Government actions, and potentially international treaties, Local Governments in Australia can help by preventing the sale of these products on their land. The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) allows a council to establish policies for the use of its land.

The City assesses applications from Community Groups and Operators to hold a market. Most Markets are operated by a designated Market Operator, or community group organiser. It is the Market Operator's responsibility to obtain all the necessary consents/approvals to operate the market. They arrange and coordinate stalls and ensure compliance with the City's health requirements and those set out by the City's Markets Policy.

An amendment to the City's Markets Policy, Events Guidelines, and Guide to Setting up a Market on Council land that prevents the sale of fur and exotic animal skins on City land could reduce markets for these cruel industries.

The City's guide to setting up a market on Council land does not apply to temporary markets that operate on up to four occasions a year, and must meet the requirements of the Events Guidelines and receive an Event Approval before operation.

The City is committed to protecting our biodiversity, flora and fauna, and to deliver on our values of being honest and ethical. It is therefore critical we work to ensure fur is not sold on Council premises.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) the Chief Executive Office be requested to:
 - (i) ask City staff to undertake an observational review of the sale of fur or potentially mislabelled fake fur at the City of Sydney markets and if they see anything of concern report back via CEO Update and;
 - (ii) investigate amending the City's Markets Policy, Event Guidelines and Guide to Setting up a Market on Council Land to prohibit the sale of all fur products, mislabelled fake fur products and exotic animal skins at markets and stalls on council owned land;

- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to:
 - (i) the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon. Peter Dutton to investigate prohibiting the import of all fur into Australia and introduce random forensic testing of imported fake fur products; and
 - (ii) the NSW Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, to request that a fur task force be set up to tackle the issue of mislabelled fake fur investigating just how widespread illegal fur labelling is.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor