

Item 3.1

Building Resilience

File No: SS051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The Resilient Sydney Program

The City was accepted into the 100 Resilient Cities Challenge on 3 December 2014. The Challenge sought to find 100 cities ready to build urban resilience - the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

In September 2015, I stood with Minister Stokes to announce the launch of the Resilient Sydney program, and the appointment of Beck Dawson as the City's first Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). Beck was tasked with bringing in experts from government and other sectors to develop a resilience strategy for Greater Sydney.

On 1 to 4 October 2015, I attended the first 100 Resilient Cities 'City Leaders Summit' in Bellagio, Italy. At the summit, I had the opportunity to listen to speakers discuss the stresses and shocks being faced by cities globally, and talk to other Mayors about the innovative policies they were putting in place to respond to them. I came back with a renewed resolve to ensure Resilience become a top priority for the City.

Over the next three years, the Resilient Sydney program developed a city-wide strategy to keep our communities safe and prepared through a research and an engagement process with an unprecedented level of voluntary cooperation and collaboration across Sydney. The process involved all 33 metropolitan councils in consultation with over 1,000 residents and 100 businesses, departments and agencies from the NSW Government, and community organisations.

The Resilient Sydney Strategy was released in 2018 with a vision for Sydney as a metropolis that is connected, inclusive and resilient. The strategy has five directions and 35 collaborative actions and is in implementation. Through its research and strategy development, Resilient Sydney identified the top eight shocks likely to impact metropolitan Sydney. Four years later, all eight have occurred, with Covid-19 an example of a large-scale pandemic shock.

Supporting Sydney during Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for the Resilient Sydney program to translate the strategy into action, by connecting Councils together to share practical resources and expertise, collecting data on impacts and undertaking advocacy to the State Government.

Resilient Sydney hosted senior leaders from Local Governments three times to identify common issues impacting their organisations. Many of these were then formally raised with relevant State Government Departments and a number of legislation and process changes followed.

Resilient Sydney also shared template documents with councils, including emergency management pandemic sub-plans, Business Continuity Plans, recovery plans, and draft communications to employees and communities.

Resilience NSW

When we launched the Resilient Sydney program, I said that Beck Dawson's appointment as the City's Chief Resilience Officer was of the utmost importance. Thankfully, following this summer's devastating bushfires, the NSW Government has recognised the value of this important work.

On 6 April 2020, the Premier of NSW, Gladys Berejiklian, announced Resilience NSW - a new body to oversee the Government's disaster preparedness and recovery arrangements. Resilience NSW will be headed by the former Rural Fire Services (RFS) Commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons, and will be responsible for coordinating emergency management policy and service delivery as well as disaster recovery.

Resilience NSW has the opportunity to enable a standardised approach to place-based, community-led resilience planning in NSW. By building on the methodology and networks created by Resilient Sydney, this body can capitalise on the City's work to date. So I offer our support and cooperation to the Resilience NSW Commissioner.

Now is the time to adopt the 100 Resilient Cities framework and invest in Local Government to deliver place-based, people-centred resilience programs for NSW. Central to this is investing in people-centred decision making through inclusive engagement with a diverse selection of representative stakeholders. This helps promote inclusivity, diversity and equity, and supports development of resilience actions reflective of a community's key priorities. The City of Sydney and its metropolitan and global partners have shown how it can be done.

I implore Resilience NSW to take a long term view of protecting the people of Sydney and NSW. The robustness and security of our water, food, fuel and energy systems will rely on the State taking a strategic view of resilience in our regions and cities. There is a base level of services we need for our future communities to thrive.

We rely on our environment to deliver many of these services, so we must protect assets such as our top soil, our waterways and other life-lines services from land clearance, fossil fuel developments and other commercial pressures. This is a key area where a state agency must set a life safety resilience approach more widely and go above and beyond the work of the Resilient Sydney Program.

I commend the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Resilience Officer for their leadership and engagement with the 33 Metropolitan Councils of the Resilient Sydney program. The work of the Resilient Sydney Program, its Steering Committee, State Government and business partners and all the 33 contributing and engaged councils of our city over the last four and a half years has enabled us to act together in the multiple crises of the last 12 months, including drought, bushfires, floods and a pandemic. These connections also serve us well in times of everyday prosperity.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
 - (i) that the Lord Mayor has written to the incoming Commissioner of Resilience NSW offering a briefing on Resilient Sydney; and
 - (ii) that the work undertaken by the Resilient Sydney Program helped local governments across metropolitan Sydney prepare for and respond to a range of shocks and stresses, including the recent bushfire crisis and Covid-19 pandemic;
- (B) the Lord Mayor advocate to the Commissioner that Resilience NSW adopt a place-based, people-centred approach through:
 - (i) adoption of the 100 Resilient Cities definition and methodology for resilience;
 - (ii) applying the 100 Resilient Cities framework to identify and understand the shocks and stresses present within NSW communities;
 - (iii) building on the experience gained through the Resilient Sydney and Resilient Melbourne programs, and the 100 resilient cities they are connected to; and
 - (iv) enabling people-centred decision making through inclusive engagement with a diverse selection of representative stakeholders in each region or place. This helps promote inclusivity, diversity, equity and supports development of resilience actions reflective of a community's key priorities;
- (C) the Lord Mayor advocate to the Commissioner to take a strong position against projects that undermine the City's future resilience by eroding life-lines services, such as fossil fuel developments that damage our waterways and fertile farmland; and
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write a letter of commendation to all the Mayors of the City for their response to support their communities, and ongoing engagement with the Resilient Sydney program.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor