

Item 12

Questions on Notice with Answers

1. Black Lives Matter Mural

By Councillor Scott

Question

Recent media reports detail phone calls made by NSW Police to the City of Sydney requesting the removal of a Black Lives Matter mural on a private property in Redfern. The mural was painted over within 24 hours.

Can the Chief Executive Officer advise the following:

1. How many calls were made by NSW Police in relation to the mural and to which section of Council were the calls referred?
2. Under which Policy was this mural removed? As Council's Graffiti Management Policy allows for 'legitimate avenues for the expression and dissemination of community information and street art' and this was clearly art, not graffiti.
3. Does Council have the power to remove art from private property?
4. Were any political representatives consulted? Is so, who?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. There were five calls made by NSW Police to the City's Customer Service Centre.
2. The Graffiti Control Act 2008 (NSW) permits councils to remove graffiti from Accessible Property without the consent of the owner/occupier under Part 4, Section 12. On this occasion, consent from the property owner was obtained by the Police

The City strives to strike a balance between minimising incidents of graffiti on public and private property and providing legitimate avenues for the expression of community information and art.

3. Yes, in certain circumstances.
4. No.

2. Cloud Arch Sculpture

By Councillor Scott

Question

1. How much has the Cloud Arch sculpture, planned for George Street, cost the City of Sydney?
2. Now that the Light Rail is complete, and the City only deferred the project, when will it be revisited?
3. How much is planned to be spent on the project if it is to proceed?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Costs for Cloud Arch are \$2,215,709.

In December 2018 Council approved the deferral of the Cloud Arch project until after the construction of Light Rail was completed so that the feasibility of incorporating Cloud Arch into the future Town Hall Square project could be considered, noting that funding for the future Town Hall Square project would need to be considered in future budgets.

Any future estimate would be based on the specifics of the proposed site. It is assumed any future site would be less complex than the former Light Rail corridor.

3 The Minerva Theatre

By Councillor Scott

Question

There has been calls and a campaign launched for the City of Sydney to buy the historic Metro Theatre Kings Cross (formerly Minerva Theatre) and turn it back into a working theatre.

Can the Chief Executive Officer advise:

1. Has the City formally investigated purchasing this site? If so, for how much?
2. If no purchase is on the table what assistance can and has the City provided for the restoration, use and ongoing operations of the Metro as a live theatre or cultural facility?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. No.
2. The City has not been asked to provide any assistance.

4. Staffing in Lord Mayor's Office

By Councillor Scott

Question

1. How many staff currently work in the Lord Mayor's Office and what is the annual cost?
2. How many staff and what budget is planned for the 2021/22 financial year?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy approved by Council outlines the support provided by the City to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors. It notes that in 2017 the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal observed the "the role of Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney has significant prominence reflecting the CBD's importance as home to the country's major business centres and public facilities of state and national importance. The Lord Mayor's responsibilities in developing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including other councils, state and federal governments, community and business groups, and the media are considered greater than other mayoral roles in NSW."

Accordingly, under the Policy there is provision for an Office of the Lord Mayor to provide support and related services to the Lord Mayor for the purposes of: policy development and advocacy; strategic planning and research; communications and media; community, government and industry liaison; exercise of civic and ceremonial functions; and administrative support.

Under Council's adopted delegations the Lord Mayor has authority to determine the structure of the Office of the Lord Mayor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the costs being within the annual budget allocated and providing the staffing of the unit does not exceed the equivalent of 22 full time staff (FTE). There are currently 21.8 FTE staff in the Office of Lord Mayor.

The 2021/22 budget for the Office of the Lord Mayor is provided in the 2021/22 budget under consideration by Council at Item 6.2 of the 28 June 2021 Council meeting.

5. Support Sydney's Homeless

By Councillor Scott

Question

In July 2020, the City of Sydney released a Homelessness Action Plan to help the vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Can the Chief Executive Officer advise:

1. How many initiatives have been completed under this Plan?
2. How many homeless have been helped under this Plan?
3. Which projects have begun but not been completed under this Plan?

4. Is this Plan continuing in the 2021/22 Financial Year? If so, how much is in the Budget to complete the Plan?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The initiatives outlined in the Homelessness Action Plan are delivered through various programs and services and reported to Council via quarterly operational plan updates and CEO Updates. The plan is continuing through 2021/22 and is scheduled for review in 2022. Budget to deliver these programs and services is allocated in the proposed operational budget for 2021/22 and in the long term financial plan.

Over the next three years, the City will provide direct funding of \$3.6M to five organisations to support Homelessness services in the inner city, including those supporting young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In addition, a further \$1.2M is allocated in the 2021/22 budget to fund our homelessness services, including our Public Space Liaison Officers. This does not include additional support and funding provided for Affordable and Diverse Housing. The most recent grants round recommendations to Council include \$800,000 to groups who deliver homelessness services to the community.

6. Hollis Park Rainbow Crossing

By Councillor Scott

Question

What is the timeframe for completion of the rainbow crossing in Hollis Park?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The City completed construction of the raised pedestrian crossing along Wilson Street at Hollis Park with the normal white zebra line markings in place in late 2019.

Transport for New South Wales do not support the application of rainbow coloured stripes to replace the white zebra line markings for a pedestrian crossing. A zebra crossing is a pedestrian management device in the public road and there are strict guidelines in place in terms of their size, spacing and colour (white only).

7. Milk Crate Sculpture

By Councillor Scott

Question

1. How much has the City spent on the milk crate sculpture planned for Belmore Park in total?
2. How much has been or continues to be paid to the artist for the creation of the sculpture?
3. Has the project been axed? If so, who made the decision and when?

4. Are any further art installations planned for Belmore Park?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. Costs incurred to date on the Pavilion are \$199,138.
2. No further funds have been expended.
3. In August 2017 Council endorsed the deferral of the installation of the public artwork Pavilion. Pavilion has been closed out and the artist has been informed.
4. A public domain plan is underway that covers the City South, including Belmore Park . This plan will focus on overall improvements for Belmore Park, addressing all amenity needs for the park's users.

8. Emergency Services Levy

By Councillor Scott

Question

1. How much did the City pay in the Emergency Services Levy in 2020/21?
2. How much is the City expected to pay for the upcoming 2021/22 Financial Year?
3. If the City no longer had to pay for this Levy what would the funding be diverted to instead?

S129275

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

The City is currently charged levies by the State in relation to emergency services under the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 (section 50) ("Fire and Rescue NSW levy") and the State Emergency Service Act 1989 (section 24H) ("SES levy").

The City paid \$5.192M for the Fire and Rescue NSW levy (\$4.727M) and the SES levy (\$0.464M) for the 2020/21 financial year, partially offset by an additional grant of \$0.705M from the State, leaving a net cost to the City of \$4.487M.

The City has been billed \$4.808M for the 2021/22 financial year, including both the Fire and Rescue NSW levy (\$4.447M) and the SES levy (\$0.361M), again partially offset by an additional grant of \$0.321M leaving a net cost to the City of \$4.487M.

If the City did not have to pay these levies, these funds would be allocated through Council's normal budget process.

9. 2021/22 Budget

By Councillor Chung

Question

Commercial Properties

1. Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide a short narrative on the modelling and thinking of staff regarding the expected return from rentals from commercial properties post Covid-19 under the scenarios reported?

Footway Licenses

2. Why do footway licenses return to \$1.5 million in the 2022/23 year and then double to \$3 million in 2023/24?

Childcare Fee Income

3. Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide an expenditure report on how much the City of Sydney spends on childcare including, but not limited to, centres, staff, grants and internal staff?

Consultancies

4. Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide a list of the known consultancies for the forthcoming year and the expected expenditure on each consultancy?

Staffing

5. Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide a list of the roles and number of staff employed and costs related to general communications, media relations and other communications staff?

General Contingencies

6. The source of funds for unplanned funding is often referred to as "General Contingency". Can the Chief Executive Officer please identify where that funds sits and how much is contained in it?

City Business and Safety

7. Could the Chief Executive Officer please detail the programs and activities contained under City Business and Safety. How many staff are employed?

The Office of the Lord Mayor is budgeted for \$41.6 million over the next 10 years.

8. How many staff are employed?
9. How much of the budget is dedicated to employment costs?
10. Please advise the cost centre for the driver and vehicle for the Lord Mayor.
11. Please advise the cost centre for audio visual equipment used by the Office of the Lord Mayor.
12. Please advise the cost centre for catering and hospitality for the Office of the Lord Mayor.

13. How many staff outside the Office of the Lord Mayor provide support to the Office of the Lord Mayor?
14. Please detail any other resources afforded to the Lord Mayor and Office of the Lord Mayor which are not contained within the Office of the Lord Mayor budget.

Public Art Budget

15. Over the 10-year \$19 million public art budget, what projects are sitting on the books for consideration?
16. Has the Cloud Arch been permanently abandoned as a potential future project?
17. How much has been spent so far on Cloud Arch?
18. How much is it expected to cost to build?
19. Has the Pavillion been permanently abandoned as a potential future project?
20. How much is expected to be spent on the Pavillion should it proceed?
21. How much has been spent to date on the Pavillion project?

Public Domain

22. How much money for asset renewal and enhancement has been slated for Chinatown over the next 10 years?
23. Please detail by year and detail project description.

Stormwater Drainage

Over the past two years internal reports showed that many of our gross pollutant traps had failed due to lack of maintenance and renewal.

24. Will the \$15m/\$3.3m budget in 2021/22 render all GPTs working at full capacity?
25. Under the budget being considered will the City of Sydney expect to meet its Zero Waste to Ocean target by 30 June 2030?

Long Term Financial Plan

26. How much is in the accumulated reserves?
27. Can Councillors be provided with a copy of the Council resolutions relating to the plan to reduce the reserves to \$200 million?
28. Can Councillors be provided with a copy of any internal policy documents relating to Council's accumulated reserves and long-term financial plan?

Balance Sheet

29. Why does the cash position reduce by \$100 million over the next 10 years?

S129268

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Commercial Properties

The City has taken a conservative approach in preparing the 2021/22 commercial properties income budget, due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic on our commercial leases. The Commercial Lease Code of Conduct ended for commercial tenants in December 2020 and for retail tenants in March 2021, however the support (rent waivers and debt deferral) for each tenant ultimately requires quantification (and validation) of the impact on their actual business results and this extensive exercise is still underway. While some tenants have seen little impact of the pandemic, there are some key industries that have had experienced a severe impact including international education, CBD retail, hospitality, tourism and theatres. We continue to monitor tenants in these categories.

In modelling the 2021/222 budget a number of assumptions have been adopted including a lower CPI assumption of 1 per cent extended letting up periods and higher incentives to reflect the Property Council of Australia data.

In addition to the base case modelled in the main financial schedules of the City's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP), supplementary Income Statement schedules have been included to model two additional scenarios should the Covid-19 pandemic extend and further impact our financial recovery, in relation to:

- commercial property leasing / licencing income, and
- street furniture advertising income.

Scenario 1 assumes full recovery from the Covid pandemic occurs over a period of six years (i.e. a prolonged recovery period), before returning to the expected long term average from 2028/29. Scenario 2 assumes full recovery from the Covid pandemic again over a period of six years, but following a greater initial decline in the earlier years. Further details are set out in the financial schedules included within the long term financial plan.

Footway Licenses

In an early response to the onset of the pandemic, Council committed to strategically support its small businesses and greater community, including initiatives to re-activate the streets through streamlined approval processes and by removing all footway approval and licence fees.

For the 2021/22 year, the City has not budgeted to receive any footway approval and licence fees, as the timing of a full recovery from the pandemic is still unknown and the recovery of small business from their current state will not be immediate. The City is however planning, within the life of the long term financial plan, for the incremental return of its business income to normal (pre-Covid) levels. This is an important assumption as the City's revenue sources are required to underpin and fund our financial capacity to continue providing the services, programs and infrastructure required by our community.

At this stage, the 2022/23 financial year presumes to recover at least half of its normal footway approval and licences income, with a full recovery by the 2023/24 financial year. These forward estimates will be monitored through the course of the year, and confirmed before Council resolves next year's budget and long term financial plan.

Childcare Fee Income

The City has budgeted to receive \$1.5M in childcare fees and childcare related grants income of \$2.5M. The cost for providing childcare related services amounts to \$5.8M for staffing and \$0.5M for non-salary related expenditure (excluding property costs).

Consultancies

The City's 2021/22 budget includes \$5.7M for consultancies, to provide independent and specialist expert advice, to support and guide the business of Council. As the budget is yet to be resolved, most consultancies will not yet have been engaged, and they are yet to be identified at this time.

While the individual consultants required vary from significant to minor pieces of work, the following table provides an overview of the key areas and value of engagements:

| Consultancies (overview) | \$M | Description |
|--------------------------------------|------|---|
| City Projects Development & Strategy | 1.03 | Masterplanning, feasibility, environmental studies, due diligence |
| Transport & City Access | 0.93 | Feasibility, concepts, case studies, policy review |
| Tree Management | 0.35 | Inspections, risk reports |
| Indigenous Leadership & Engagement | 0.32 | Reconciliation action plan, community consultation |
| Health & Building | 0.28 | Compliance investigations |
| Business & Service Improvements | 0.25 | Improvement facilitation, industry advice |
| Workforce Services | 0.18 | Independent assessments, evaluation and surveys |
| Resilient Sydney | 0.13 | Technical review, planning guidelines |
| City Greening | 0.13 | Site audits, sportsfield testing |
| Green Infrastructure | 0.12 | Engineering expertise, water metering |
| Financial Services | 0.09 | Credit card security assessment |
| Security Management | 0.07 | Crowded places, etc |

Staffing

The City Communications team provides a centralised communications service to support the 1.3 million people who live in, work in or visit the City of Sydney each year (pre-Covid).

Total communications staff: 49.5 FTE.

Current year salary budget: \$6.5M.

General Contingencies

General contingency funds, budgeted at \$2.5M for 2021/22, are held within corporate costs. These funds are set aside for opportunities or situations that arise post budget, that Council resolves to fund, including for example new initiatives and/or disaster relief.

The quarterly report provides full details of all expenditure from all contingency funds throughout the year.

City Business and Safety

The City Business and Safety team is made up of 14 full time employees and includes the City Business, Night Time City and Safe City teams who deliver programs in support of the Council adopted Economic Development Strategy, Community Safety Action Plan and other City action plans to support priority industry sectors of the local economy including retail, tourism, tech, international education and night time economy.

Programs delivered range from precinct promotion and activation, to capacity building programs for small-medium enterprises, grants for major events that deliver economic impact, financial support for businesses and creatives to trial new programming after dark, safety programs to prevent crime and protect those most vulnerable in our communities. The team has led the recent work with the NSW government to revitalise the city centre, contributing to the economic recovery of the city from the impacts of Covid-19 and creating the conditions for local economies to adapt and grow, contributing to a dynamic, thriving and safe city.

Office of the Lord Mayor

The Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy approved by Council outlines the support provided by the City to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors. It notes that in 2017 the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal observed the "the role of Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney has significant prominence reflecting the CBD's importance as home to the country's major business centres and public facilities of state and national importance. The Lord Mayor's responsibilities in developing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including other councils, state and federal governments, community and business groups, and the media are considered greater than other mayoral roles in NSW."

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Under Council's adopted delegations the Lord Mayor has authority to determine the structure of the Office of the Lord Mayor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the costs being within the annual budget allocated and providing the staffing of the unit does not exceed the equivalent of 22 full time staff (FTE). There are currently 21.8 FTE staff in the Office of Lord Mayor. Salaries and wages comprise approximately 90 per cent of the Office of the Lord Mayor's budget.

The 2021/22 budget for the Office of the Lord Mayor is provided in the 2021/22 budget under consideration by Council at Item 6.2 of the 28 June 2021 Council meeting.

The Lord Mayor's driver and use of a vehicle is not included in the Office of the Lord Mayor's budget. The Office of the Lord Mayor's budget covers any audio visual equipment and/or catering and hospitality used by the Office of the Lord Mayor.

Public Art Budget

The following projects are in development as part of the City Art Public Art Program:

- Laneways, City Centre
- Connecting Project, Green Square
- Drying Green, Green Square
- Bara – Monument to the Eora
- Harbour Walk (Eora Journey)
- Eora Journey other projects (walks / Redfern terrace)
- Biennale Legacy Project until 2024

- Aids Memorial.

Conservation and maintenance are included in the \$19M.

In December 2018 Council approved the deferral of the Cloud Arch project until after the construction of Light Rail was completed so that the feasibility of incorporating Cloud Arch into the future Town Hall Square project could be considered, noting that funding for the future Town Hall Square project would need to be considered in future budgets.

Cloud Arch has been deferred, the contract closed out and the artist and head contractor informed. The final costs for the project were \$2,215,709 as previously provided as recently as March 2021.

As per the report put to Council in December 2018, the estimate for the project was \$22M at that time. Any future estimate would be based on the specifics of the proposed site. It is assumed any future site would be less complex than the former Light Rail corridor.

In August 2017 Council endorsed the deferral of the installation of the public artwork Pavilion

Pavilion has been closed out and the artist has been informed. The final costs for the project were \$199,138.

Public Domain

The Long Term Financial Plan includes, the George Street South Pedestrianisation project (\$43.5M), which includes Hay Street, Thomas Street, Ultimo Road and has a large public domain component within the Haymarket/ Chinatown area (estimated at \$15M between 2021/22 to 2022/23). There are \$5.5M of funds specifically set aside for future Chinatown public domain upgrade works (2023/24 to 2026/27).

A portion of the future forward estimates for public domain upgrade works (\$36.5M between 2024/25 to 2030/31) may be directed to Chinatown if Council endorses a future public domain study for the City South precinct.

In addition, the long term plan includes roads, footways, kerbs and paver infill renewal programs of \$154M over the 10 years, which a portion will be allocated to Chinatown based on the need and condition assessment, in line with our asset management practices.

Stormwater Drainage

All repairs recommended in the GPT audit have been completed and GPTs are all operational.

To ensure that GPTs are working to their full capacity, the City has developed an optimised GPT cleaning, inspection and maintenance program. Currently GPTs are inspected and cleaned in accordance with the recommendation made in the GPT audit report. The recommendations are based on the capacity of the GPT and the size of the catchment and ensure that resources are being allocated efficiently to maximise performance of the overall water quality network.

The City was recently awarded Stormwater Australia's 2021 National Award for Excellence in Asset management. This award related to the audit, repair and optimisation of our GPT assets.

Long Term Financial Plan

The City ensures within its financial planning process to hold sufficient cash reserves to satisfy all of its legislative requirements (or external restrictions), as well as the internal restrictions (employee liabilities, etc) which Council has elected to set aside to ensure prudent financial controls. This minimum total to satisfy these requirements sits between \$180M to \$200M.

When developing the budgets and annual revision of the long term financial plan, this base level of reserves is one of our key financial modelling parameters, as it allows us to determine the funding available for our capital works program.

As such is it reflected in every annual budget briefing, and resolved by Council in adopting the Operational Plan, annual budget and forward estimates within the long term financial plan (as part of the Resourcing Strategy) every June for more than 10 consecutive years.

Balance Sheet

The cash position reduces over the life of the plan because the cash inflows from revenue and grants are less than the operating and capital expenditure over this timeframe. This outcome primarily reflects the City's large capital works program, particularly in the early years of the plan, consistent with the forward estimates and projections identified within the long term financial plan for the past 10 years.

10. Legal Matters Costs and Progress Quarterly Update

By Councillor Chung

Question

Could the Chief Executive Officer please provide an update since the last advice in December 2020:

1. An update of all court proceedings that Council is currently engaged in broken down by Court and type of matter (eg but not limited to class 1-5 appeals, local court prosecutions, NCAT proceedings, Supreme Court proceedings, IRC proceedings).
2. In table form, a summary of each court matter, costs to date, proceedings number and parties to the matter and status of each matter.
3. Year to date costs for each type of matter broken down by costs for consultants, external lawyers and other costs.
4. 2020/21 and year to date summary of matters finalised by matter including outcome and costs for each matter.

S129268

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

This information as at 30 June 2021 will be provided via a confidential CEO Update

11. Sydney Town Hall Trigeneration Plant

By Councillor Phelps

Question

On July 2020, the City of Sydney announced that all of the City's operations "are now run on 100 per cent renewable electricity."

However, a 1 June 2021 article in the Australian Financial Review (AFR) reported that, according to the City's energy reports, natural gas usage has increased fourfold from 21,894 GJ to 84,811 GJ between 2006 and 2020.

The Sydney Town Hall trigeneration plant is responsible for a significant increase in natural gas usage by the City of Sydney.

The same AFR article claims that this plant is, in fact, fit to be powered by biogas.

Natural gas now supplies 45.2 per cent of the energy used in the City's operations.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. Why is the trigeneration plant still powered by natural gas?
2. What is the feasibility of transitioning the trigeneration plant to biogas?
3. What steps need to be undertaken before the City is able to transition the trigeneration plant on top of Sydney Town Hall to biogas?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. There is no offsite renewable gas option as yet in metropolitan NSW. Consequently, the trigeneration plant is powered by natural gas for the time being. However, as per the draft environmental strategy, the City aims to phase out natural gas from its operations and will seek to purchase renewable gas to provide all our gas needs by 2025.
2. There is no technical constraint on transitioning the plant to renewable gas. However, as the plant is supplied from the Jemena gas network, there does need to be a suitable source of renewable gas in the network. A number of renewable gas plants are likely to be added over the next three years.
3. Council needs to approve an appropriate procurement pathway to secure renewable gas. The City is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with Jemena and Sydney Water to be part of a pilot renewable gas certification scheme.

12. Park Refurbishment Plaques

By Councillor Phelps

Question

Bronze plaques are frequently used around the City of Sydney to commemorate events, people or organisations that have had a significant impact on the local and wider communities.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. In the last financial year, how many bronze plaques have been produced or planned for park refurbishments in the City of Sydney?
2. How many of these plaques mention the current Lord Mayor, Clover Moore?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

Ceremonial plaques are produced for park reopening events. These ceremonial plaques include the name of the Lord Mayor at the time. In the last financial year, ceremonial plaques have been produced for the opening of the following:

- James Hilder Reserve, Surry Hills
- Strickland Park, Chippendale
- Daniel Dawson Reserve, Alexandria
- Palmerston Avenue Steps, Glebe
- Cardigan St Reserve, Glebe
- Fig Lane Park Playground, Ultimo
- Hollis Park Playground, Newtown
- Kings Lane Reserve, Darlinghurst
- Womerah Gardens, Darlinghurst
- Daniel Dawson Reserve, Alexandria
- Beaconsfield Park, Alexandria
- Shannon Reserve Playground, Surry Hills.

13. Natural Gas Use by the City of Sydney

By Councillor Phelps

Question

In July 2020, the City of Sydney announced on its website that all of the City's operations "are now run on 100 per cent renewable electricity."

However, a 1 June 2021 article in the Australian Financial Review reported that, according to the City's energy reports, natural gas usage has increased fourfold from 21,894 GJ to 84,811 GJ between 2006 and 2020.

Gas now supplies 45.2 per cent of the energy used in the City's operations.

Could the Chief Executive Officer please advise:

1. Why has the City included gas as a "renewable energy" in their statements?
2. How have the City's aquatic centres contributed to the increase in gas usage each year since their establishment?
3. Has the City identified any sources of renewable gas that could power our co- and trigeneration systems?
4. If not, will the City commit to converting these systems to electric power so that can be truly 100 per cent renewably powered?

S129272

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. The City has reduced the organisation's carbon emissions by an estimated 76 per cent compared to 2006 levels. The City has stated it now meets its grid electricity needs from 100 per cent renewable sources. The City has also stated that it plans to phase out natural gas. The draft environmental strategy states we will seek to purchase renewable gas to provide all our gas needs by 2025.
2. The City has moved to reduce reliance on natural gas to heat aquatic centres. For example, at the new aquatic centre in Green Square, a major shift towards electricity-based heating was engineered during the design process. Also, the City recently upgraded the electric heat pumps at its other indoor aquatic facilities. The new pumps are more efficient and run more often, reducing reliance on gas boilers.

Fully phasing out use of gas requires detailed technical assessments and substantial investments of capital. As well, the City needs to engage with pool users to demonstrate that suitable levels of comfort can be maintained.

3. Multiple renewable gas plants are likely to be on-line in the Jemena gas network in the next three years. For example, a pilot plant at Sydney Water's Malabar plan is currently in planning. Council needs to approve an appropriate procurement pathway to secure renewable gas. The City is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with Jemena to be part of a pilot renewable gas certification scheme.
4. The City is seeking to phase out the use of natural gas in all its facilities by 2025.