

Item 3.2

WorldPride 2023 - Opportunities for Oxford Street

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

In February 2023 Sydney will welcome Australia and the world to join us in celebrating WorldPride. This Festival, spanning almost three weeks, will be one of the largest events hosted in Sydney since the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. It will bring LGBTIQ+ communities, friends and allies to Sydney to celebrate belonging, pride and connection to our city and its unique culture. In showcasing our city to the world, WorldPride will demonstrate that Sydney is a welcoming inclusive city that values and supports our LGBTIQ+ citizens.

Oxford Street and its surrounding neighbourhoods, long recognised in Australia and internationally as the heart and home of Sydney's LGBTIQ+ communities, is expected to be a major focal point and activity hub for WorldPride and will build on strong ongoing support for Oxford Street and LGBTIQ+ communities.

This support was strongly expressed in the consultations for the Oxford Street Planning Proposal. Many participants told us they want Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ character to be recognised and retained.

Preparations for WorldPride 2023 and the resulting celebrations present opportunities to explore the protection, preservation and strengthening of Oxford Street and its surrounding neighbourhoods as a focal point for LGBTIQ+ community life and culture. Such an exploration would complement the theme for WorldPride 2023 - GATHER DREAM AMPLIFY. Earlier this year, the CEO of WorldPride, Kate Wickett, acknowledged the opportunity World Pride presented for community organisers and local businesses to collaborate with the City of Sydney on Oxford Street.

The City should seize this opportunity to build on the many actions we have already taken to support our LGBTIQ+ places and communities including:

- Installing the permanent Rainbow Crossing at Taylor Square South in 2019.
- Naming Equality Green - the area of Prince Alfred Park where 30,000 people gathered on 15 November 2017 to celebrate Australia's strong support for marriage equality - and installing a new 90 metre rainbow path at Equality Green's edge
- Transitioning to flying the Progress Pride Flag at Taylor Square and raising the Flag at Sydney Town Hall to mark the beginning of the Sydney Gay and Mardi Gras Festival.
- Flying Progress Pride banners along Oxford Street at every available opportunity, replacing the Rainbow banners.
- Working with the Pride History Group to update the City's Oxford Street walking tour brochure, Parade focussing on LGBTIQ+ content and making it available through the City's Culture Walks app.

- Providing financial and logistical support for the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Festival
- Supporting Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras' successful bid with a cash sponsorship of \$50,000.
- Supporting pre-event planning and production of WorldPride 2023 with cash sponsorships totalling \$750,000.
- Supporting numerous LGBTIQ community organisations through our Grants and Sponsorships Programs.
- Working with LGBTIQ community organisations and government agencies to ensure LGBTIQ+ people feel safe and have access to support if they need it.
- Working in partnership with organisations to host awareness raising events including Wear It Purple Day, The Transgender Day of Visibility and Transgender Day of Remembrance.

WorldPride provides an opportunity to build on this work by develop an LGBTIQ+ Cultural and Social Place Strategy for Oxford Street, similar to those developed for LGBTIQ+ precincts in other cities. which would aim to strengthen Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ cultural identity and importance. This strategy would recognise the significance of Oxford Street for the LGBTIQ+ communities, identify important LGBTIQ+ places in the Oxford Street neighbourhood and set out opportunities for the City of Sydney, community organisations and the private sector to strengthen, support and promote the Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ cultural identity and importance.

Apart from the work undertaken by other cities to support their LGBTIQ+ communities and places, there is already extensive Australian and international research into LGBTIQ+ communities, cultures, places and histories could support the development of such a strategy.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) Oxford Street and its surrounding neighbourhoods have long been recognised as significant to LGBTIQ+ communities in Australia and internationally;
- (ii) The community has expressed strong support for retaining Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ character;
- (iii) WorldPride 2023 will bring increased national and international focus on Oxford Street; and
- (iv) preparations for and celebration of WorldPride 2023 presents new opportunities for protecting, preserving and strengthening Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ character; and

- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate developing an LGBTIQ+ Cultural and Social Place Strategy for Oxford Street, similar to those developed in other cities, in consultation with WorldPride 2023, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Pride History Group and other LGBTIQ+ community organisations which:
- (i) recognises the significance of Oxford Street for the LGBTIQ+ communities;
 - (ii) identifies important LGBTIQ+ places in the Oxford Street neighbourhood;
 - (iii) aims to strengthen Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ cultural identity and importance;
 - (iv) builds on the extensive work already undertaken by the City of Sydney in support of the LGBTIQ community and the Oxford Street neighbourhood;
 - (v) draws on the existing extensive body of research relating to the Sydney LGBTIQ community, Oxford Street and LGBTIQ places and neighbourhoods and other LGBTIQ+ communities, cultures, places and histories;
 - (vi) considers examples of work undertaken by other cities to support their LGBTIQ+ communities and places;
 - (vii) sets out opportunities for the City of Sydney, community organisations and the private sector to support and promote the Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ cultural identity and importance;
 - (viii) provides a resource for people and organisations in the Oxford Street neighbourhood about the significance of Oxford Street for the LGBTIQ+ communities and its future; and
 - (ix) report back to Councillors via the CEO Update.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor