

Item 3.2

City of Sydney Council Achievements 2016-2021

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Tonight's meeting is the last of an extraordinary five-year term on Council. During this term we have achieved some great outcomes – for those who live in our area now as well as those who will live, work, run their business or visit here in the future.

This is despite the challenges caused by the 2019/20 climate-induced bushfire catastrophe and Covid-19. In each instance the City responded.

To help Australians affected by the bushfire crisis, we worked with the NSW Government to establish the Office of Emergency Management. This office matched council staff from metropolitan councils with regional councils in need of assistance. City staff did everything from clearing felled trees in Wollondilly, to assisting south coast communities access emergency houses and rebuild their businesses. We supported people staying with relatives in the City with free parking permits throughout the crisis and we raised over \$13 million throughout the New Year's Eve period for the Red Cross disaster relief and recovery fund.

Supporting our community through Covid

The two Covid lockdowns were really challenging for Sydney, and are estimated to have cost the economy of our local government area about \$250 million per week. Council focused on helping our communities survive the worst of the pandemic and we now stand ready to help our city recover.

Since the start of the pandemic we have provided:

- \$557,000 waived for inspection, registration, application and administrative fees for compliance activities to over 5,000 businesses.
- Over \$3.2 million in footway dining fees waived
- Rent relief on commercial properties is forecast at over \$7.8 million
- Over \$2.1 million in rent relief for childcare centre providers
- Over \$2.9 million in rent relief for social, cultural and creative spaces
- In this quarter we provided \$199,000 in grants to 21 organisations for programs which address food security, community cohesion projects and digital inclusion.
- Foregone over \$2.1 million in parking fees and provided 366 parking permits for essential workers.
- Distributed 11,500 cloth masks to residents

- And, in July 2021, we announced our lockdown support package which included \$5 million in grants and donations to support vulnerable communities, plus an additional \$7.8 million in estimated revenue foregone each month to provide relief through fee waivers, rent reduction, quick response grants and food security.
- And we will be opening up another \$4 million business support grant program in February 2022.

We also fast-tracked construction projects where possible, supported the contractors, and are working closely with organisations like OzHarvest to deliver food relief.

Throughout the pandemic, our Council has also played a vital advocacy role for our City. We rallied behind sole traders and small businesses with less than \$75,000 in turnover, that were initially excluded from the NSW Government's Business Support grants – but that changed following a 12,000 signature petition to call on the Government to financially support Sydney's smallest businesses.

We added our voice to the campaign to bring back JobKeeper and we continue to advocate for the State Government to underwrite pandemic insurance for our events sector to provide a viable and enduring boost to business and sector confidence.

As part of our initial post-Covid recovery at the end of 2020 and start of 2021, the City partnered with the NSW Government to establish the \$20 million AI Fresco Summer program. Grants up to \$50,000 were made available to artists, musicians and performers to activate our CBD.

Our Sunset Piazza program also brought 32 nights of pop, comedy, hip-hop, jazz and opera on an Italo-themed outdoor summer stage in the shadow of St Mary's cathedral.

More than 260 new outdoor dining applications have been approved across our City. Feedback shows that 90 per cent of businesses involved say it has been beneficial or even crucial to their business; 45 per cent have employed an extra two or more staff a week, and 41 per cent have increased staff hours by 10 hours or more a week. Fifty-eight per cent have had their turnover increased.

After a slow start to the national vaccine rollout, the City worked with the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) to explore ways in which we can increase the accessibility of vaccinations within the City of Sydney Local Government Area for social housing tenants and our local Aboriginal communities in particular.

The City worked with the Sydney Local Health District to establish vaccine clinics in the following locations:

- Peter Forsyth Auditorium, Franklyn Street, Glebe
- Ultimo Community Centre, William Henry Street, Ultimo
- Green Square Library, Botany Road, Zetland
- National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, George Street, Redfern
- Northcott Community Centre, Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
- Flourish Australia, Buckingham Street, Surry Hills

- Ozanam Learning Centre, Forbes Street, Woolloomooloo

The City's Harold Park Community Hall was also used as a vaccine clinic and our East Sydney Community Arts Centre hosted a testing clinic.

Our action on climate change

Under Sustainable Sydney 2030, the City has become an environmental leader with bold targets and action on waste, water, energy and greenhouse emissions.

We became carbon neutral in 2007 and we were the first government in Australia certified in 2011.

In 2019, we declared a climate emergency and in February 2020, we brought our net-zero target forward by a decade, to net zero across our Local Government Area by 2040.

In May of 2021, we brought this target forward again; to net-zero by 2035. The City's net-zero targets are backed up with real, tangible plans. We have reduced city-wide emissions by 22 per cent while Sydney's economy has grown by 53 per cent since 2006. Had it been business as usual, emissions would have increased by 57 per cent in that time.

Since July 2020, the City of Sydney's operations have been powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity. 73 per cent of our City's emissions are produced via energy consumption.

In 2021, we met our 2008 Sustainable Sydney 2030 goal to reduce operational emissions by 70 per cent by 2030 - nine years early in 2021. Across the City's operations, our greenhouse emissions targets were met by retrofitting 45 of our major buildings with energy savings measures, replacing 6,604 street and park lights with energy efficient LED lights, installing solar panels on almost every viable City-owned rooftop. We installed Tesla batteries at the Alexandra Canal in 2018 to store the power from its 1,600 strong rooftop solar array.

We were the first Australian city to install energy-efficient LED streetlights on a large scale as part of a \$7 million, three-year project, which reduced emissions by 2,000 tonnes and saved \$800,000 a year in electricity bills and maintenance costs. In August 2018, Council agreed to pay Ausgrid to fast-track replacement of the remaining 9,500 Ausgrid streetlights. When this project is complete it will save over \$1 million in energy and maintenance costs, and 3,400 tonnes of carbon a year. So far over 2,000 fittings have been replaced.

The City has also reduced our fleet emissions through procuring electric vehicles and bicycles. Our parks team now operate 100 per cent electric leaf-blowers, mowers, whipper snippers and hedge trimmers, even an electric truck. The City has also trialled electric garbage trucks with Cleanaway on the narrow streets of Glebe and Elizabeth Bay. We look forward to adding these trucks to our fleet as soon as possible.

This term, the Council started an important trial involving the separate collection and recycling of food scraps from residential properties. Food waste typically makes up one third of our residents' red lid rubbish bins. By collecting and recycling food scraps separately, we can reduce waste to landfill. We can then convert the food scraps into green electricity and fertiliser for use on gardens and farms. Phase 1 of the trial started in July 2019, and from September 2020 we began expanding the project into phase 2. Currently the trial involves over 1,000 houses and 180 apartment buildings across the city, comprising more than 15,000 households.

Across the Local Government Area, we've worked successfully with the business community to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions with programs such as the Better Buildings Partnership, CitySwitch Green Office, Environmental Upgrade Agreements and Smart Green Business.

Better Building Partnership members have reduced their emissions by 55 per cent and are tracking towards a massive 83 per cent reduction. They have also reduced their water use by 26 per cent and saved over \$30 million a year in costs. In 2018, Lendlease, Dexus, AMP, Investa, and GPT announce ambitious new goals to achieve net zero emissions well before 2050.

Our Smart Green Apartments program now covers about 14,000 dwellings, and in 2018 we launched our Sustainable Destinations Partnership. This new partnership brings together key entertainment venues and hotels in our City to collaborate on bringing emissions down.

The City's potable water use has been maintained at 2006 levels by watering our parks more efficiently, connecting some parks to recycled water supplies and retrofitting our properties with efficient fixtures and fittings. We also delivered precinct-scale stormwater harvesting schemes at Green Square Town Centre and Sydney Park. During light rail construction, the City installed a water pipe along George Street to connect buildings in our CBD to a recycled water network. We have now gone to tender to find an operator.

After years of advocacy, the NSW Government installed a CBD air quality monitor in September 2019. This monitor is providing invaluable data to our planners by providing a reliable baseline with which to measure the negative health impacts of major road projects and the improvements made by new cycleways, public transport and urban greening.

The City of Sydney is one of only a few Councils in Australia that has consistently increased canopy cover, and the only capital city to do so. This year we introduced our new Greening City strategy which will see us aim for 27 per cent canopy cover by 2050 and 40 per cent vegetation and greenery cover at floor level across the city by 2050. Over this term, the City has planted 375,900 plants. The City has planted more than 15,000 trees since 2005 and our new plan will see us plant another 700 trees each year.

Effective action requires collaboration and partnerships across Federal, State and Local Government. We've continued to advocate for improved minimum standards for new homes and regulatory reform where change is needed to achieve a sustainable future for our city including energy market reform.

Continuing our Long Term Vision

Our ongoing achievements are the direct result of having a long term plan for the future – Sustainable Sydney 2030 – and outstanding financial planning and management which has allowed us to deliver on priorities while remaining debt free and keeping rates among the lowest in the metropolitan area, with free rates for pensioners.

In 2008, Sustainable Sydney 2030 was adopted following the most extensive engagement program the City had ever undertaken. It included talking to tens of thousands of residents, businesses and visitors. We held roundtable discussions, major community workshops, forums with the Indigenous community and primary school children and recorded 18,854 website hits and 157,000 visitors to Customs House during the exhibition period. The majority told us they wanted Council to take action to address climate change.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 defined key issues and set out 10 strategic directions to take our city forward. Over the years, staff have turned the vision of Sustainable Sydney 2030 into reality.

In 2019, we started the process of developing the next iteration of our 2030 long term strategic plan - Sustainable Sydney 2050, which will build on Sustainable Sydney 2030 and guide the work of our City in the coming decades.

As part of this development, the City again undertook extensive consultation, talking to tens of thousands of residents, businesses and visitors. We held roundtable discussions, major community workshops, forums with the Indigenous community and 23 workshops with young people and surveyed over 5,000 people on our Sydney Your Say website and our 33 pop-up exhibitions. Covid will continue to cast a long shadow and likely change the shape of Sustainable Sydney 2050 and it's big ideas before it is adopted by the next Council.

Supporting our growing city

Between 2010 and 2020, our local area population increased by 27.3 per cent or 68,988 people. In contrast, Greater Sydney grew by 15.1 per cent while NSW grew by 12.5 per cent over the same period. By 2031, the local population is projected to increase to more than 320,000.

In this term, we've invested \$319 million to maintain and renew local roads, footpaths, plazas and laneways in the city centre. This work has brought previously underused spaces to life, the results of which are available for all to see.

In 2018, we opened the Waranara Early Education Centre in Green Square. It provides an 84-place early learning centre inside a 1920s heritage-listed hospital outpatients building that was given new life by architects Fox Johnston.

In our ever growing city, the provision of parks, playgrounds and open space is more important than ever.

Since 2004 we've added over 24 hectares of open space to our city. Key projects include Pirrama Park, Pyrmont; Harmony Park, Surry Hills; Harold Park, Glebe; Chippendale Green and Sydney Park.

Sydney Park is now one of Sydney's best loved regional parks, with at least one million people a year enjoying it. We've invested \$23 million transforming the former tip into a 40 hectare park with lush grass, gardens, hills, meandering pathways and wetlands. This includes an \$11.3 million water reuse scheme – the largest in Sydney - that will provide water to the parks four wetland areas which are an important part of the park's ecosystems as well as playing a role in flood mitigation.

In the last 17 years, we've upgraded 132 neighbourhood parks and delivered 61 new or upgraded playground facilities. In the last term, these have included:

- Renwick Street Playground, Alexandria
- Nita McCrea Park, Millers Point
- Bowden Playground, Alexandria
- Jack Shuttleworth Playground, Erskineville
- Amy Street Reserve, Erskineville
- Jessie Street Gardens, Sydney
- Foveaux Street, Surry Hills upgrade

- Elizabeth McCrae Playground, Redfern
- Harold Park, Forest Lodge
- Matron Ruby Grant Park, Green Square
- Frances Newtown Reserve, Palmer Street Darlinghurst
- Shannon Reserve Playground, Surry Hills
- Ross St Park, Forest Lodge
- Hollis Park, Newtown
- Strickland Park, Chippendale
- Cardigan Reserve, Glebe

And we've built the four-court Perry Park indoor recreation centre and delivered new swimming centres including the Gunyama Park Aquatic Centre, the largest aquatic centre built in metropolitan Sydney since the Olympics. And it recently won the most prestigious architecture prize in Australia – the National Australian Institute Award for public architecture.

We've also delivered major skate facilities at Federal Park in Annandale/Glebe and one in Sydney Park which features the largest flow-bowl in the southern hemisphere.

The Centenary Extension of the Hyde Park Anzac Memorial was completed in November 2019 and included the City-funded \$3.6 million upgrade of the Pool of Reflection.

The City has also called on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to open up 20 hectares of Moore Park Golf Course for public recreational use. 45 hectares of public land – roughly the size of Sydney Park – remains fenced off to a small group of golfers. When the City consulted residents near the course, 77 per cent agreed that some or all of the course should become public open space. Opening up Moore Park Golf Course would make a profound difference to the mental health and wellbeing of those living in the high-density neighbourhoods that are adjacent to this parkland.

The City has also worked with residents and the community to protect Moore Park from the threats posed by creeping commercialisation of the park, the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment and parking on the precious green space.

The \$13 billion Green Square development has been facilitated by the City's planning work and a \$1.3 billion infrastructure plan. When complete, Green Square will be home to 61,000 people and 22,000 jobs.

Our commitment of \$540 million over ten years for Green Square is delivering quality infrastructure as well as new community facilities. This term we've opened the innovative library and plaza; Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre; as well as the Green Square Community and Cultural Precinct on the former South Sydney Hospital site.

The community and cultural precinct houses the Peter Stutchbury designed Joynton Avenue Creative Centre. The Centre which is managed by 107 projects provides an accessible place for creative practice, a gallery space suitable for an artist-run initiatives, opportunities for emerging artists to hire low cost spaces, as well as incubator office space. The precinct also houses the Warana Early Education Centre and the Banga Community Shed with tools, equipment and other resources for the local community to use – dedicated to the reuse and repair of household electronics.

Between 2016 and 2018 we worked with Sydney Water to build a \$140 million, 2.4km trunk drain below Green Square, which takes in storm water and directs it to Botany Bay via our water recycling plant. Today it's moving around 300 bathtubs of water per second to reduce the risk of flooding in Green Square. This critical infrastructure has been transformational. Without it, flood risks would prevent any development in the area going ahead. It has made the area a better, safer place to live, visit and work – free from flash-flooding.

After years of community campaigning, the NSW Government agreed to fund in the 2021 budget to build a new primary school in Green Square on land made available by the City. The City has contributed \$25 million to this project so community facilities can be used by the wider community outside of school hours. The school will sit on the old South Sydney hospital site, on land specially reserved by the City for this project.

Work is continuing on the Drying Green park, an important civic space that will connect the library plaza with the creative centre, primary school and early learning centre and will be completed in 2022 – all part of the Town Centre.

In Glebe, we opened the Harold Park Community Centre inside the old Tramsheds in 2018.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces' current proposal to change the Developer Contributions system in NSW threatens the ability of every Council to deliver much-needed new community facilities, and transfers that burden onto our ratepayers. That's why the City is collaborating with other metropolitan councils to lobby the NSW Government to ensure this legislation does not proceed.

Maintaining a globally competitive and innovative city

Our Central Sydney Planning Strategy has been endorsed by Council and we're already approving developments consistent with it that will add to our 2030 employment targets. This plan lays the foundations for future economic growth, unlocking up to 2.9 million square metres of floor space while protecting heritage, public views and sun access to special public places.

By re-balancing incentives between residential and commercial floor space in the City, it will provide for 133,000 jobs and 10,000 more dwellings, and with the introduction of an affordable housing levy could deliver 300-520 new affordable housing units.

The Strategy is the first major reform of Central Sydney planning controls in 45 years and will ensure that Central Sydney maintains its role as Australia's most productive location and export-orientated services centre.

We've made design excellence a priority. Design excellence standards are now applied across all city development, not just the large commercial developments. During the last five years, the city has approved development applications valued at \$16 billion and we have approved 1.1 million square metres of commercial development applications.

In response to the devastating effect the NSW Government's lockout laws had on our City's nightlife, the City established the Creative Sector and Nightlife Advisory Panel in 2018 and released the Open and Creative City discussion paper. This outlined planning controls to make it easier for shops and businesses to extend trading from 7am to 10pm in key retail areas.

Our Late Night Development Control Plan was endorsed by Council the same year, allowing for 24-hour trading across the entire CBD, and until 2am on village high-streets, creating new late-night trading areas in some of the city's fastest-growing neighbourhoods, as well as a new cultural precinct in Alexandria, and rewarding venues holding live performances and creative events with an extra hour of trading.

In 2018, we partnered with the State and Federal Government to deliver the Inaugural Visiting Entrepreneur Program, exposing over 2,000 Sydney based start-ups to global tech entrepreneurs, like artificial intelligence expert Liesl Yearsley and social entrepreneur Mark Brand.

The City has worked with Lendlease to establish a 3800 square metre innovation and technology hub for climate related tech start-ups in their 180 George Street development. Over its first 10 years, we hope to see more than 100 green start-ups and scale-ups get the support they need to grow and create more than 1,500 jobs.

Building a connected city

Inadequate public transport and transport congestion has cost our economy around \$6.6 billion per annum and is consistently identified in global surveys as one of the major factors affecting our competitiveness and liveability.

The City worked in partnership with the NSW Government to deliver light rail through the CBD and George Street to reduce congestion and transform George Street into a world-class main street. We contributed \$220 million to support CBD public domain works paving, tree planting, street furniture and including the creation of pedestrianised zones.

The pedestrianisation of George Street proved so successful that in 2021 we began permanently pedestrianising George Street between Town Hall and Rawson Place, Central. This work, also with new seats, trees, room for outdoor dining and more space for people is now complete between Town Hall and Goulburn Street. We look forward to seeing the rest of this project completed in the new term.

Sydneysiders told us they would start riding bikes if we had safe, separated cycleways. We listened and acted. To date 25 kilometres of new separated cycleways have been completed in our local area, including a safe separated cycleway stretching from Newtown all the way into the City centre.

Some of the cycleways included in the current council term include:

- Wilson and Burren Streets, Newtown
- Miller and Saunders Streets, Pyrmont
- Epsom Road, Rosebery
- Lawson Street, Redfern
- Liverpool Street, Sydney

- Chalmers Street, Sydney

As workers made a cautious return to the city centre, the City worked with the NSW Government to establish pop-up cycleways as an additional means of transport. Our cycleways and footpath extensions gave people more room to physically distance, as well as safe and efficient ways to travel around the City.

The State and Federal Governments have also committed to funding a safe, separated cycle link on Oxford Street from Hyde Park to the Paddington Gates of Centennial Park. There are over 2,000 bike trips on Oxford Street every day, and the most reported bike accidents of any street in our area. Adding a separated cycleway will lead to substantial safety improvements for cyclists and will be a great for commuters and great for the fabulous strip.

The City is continuing to advocate for 40km/hour streets across the Local Government Area. In mid-2020, Transport for NSW agreed to lower speed limits at Oxford Street, Moore Park Road, Pyrmont Bridge Road and within the villages of Pyrmont, Ultimo, Darlington, Camperdown and west Paddington.

To mitigate traffic impacts of the WestConnex project, the City worked with the Alexandria community to develop a comprehensive local area traffic management plan. Transport for NSW provided in-principal approval to 17 out of 20 treatment measures. The City has progressed a number of these measures and will continue to look for other ways to calm traffic and reduce rat-running as further sections of the WestConnex toll-road open.

Creating a fairer city

Although housing is the responsibility of the State, the City takes action in every way we can. Our affordable housing levies have resulted in 859 completed dwellings since 2015, 12 per cent of which are Aboriginal tenancies, with 135 in the pipeline.

The NSW Government has now agreed to the City expanding these levies across the Local Government Area, which will deliver another 1,950 affordable dwellings by 2036.

City West will deliver around 400 dwellings for people on very low, low and moderate incomes in Waterloo, Green Square and Alexandria over the next five years with approximately \$200m in funding we collected from the affordable housing levies in Pyrmont/Ultimo and Green Square.

Council introduced innovative planning controls in the Southern Employment Lands and Botany Road Precinct to enable affordable housing in areas zoned for mixed business.

The City has sold land to Community Housing Providers at a discounted rate to develop affordable housing which has resulted in the development of 122 homes at Harold Park, Green Square, and Redfern with 332 more homes to come.

Council established the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund, which has issued more than \$10 million in grants to support new social and affordable housing projects, resulting in 115 new dwellings, including Hammond Care in Darlinghurst for homeless people especially older women and St. George Community Housing in Chippendale for youth at risk, and 160 social and affordable houses in Gibbons St Redfern, where there is 43 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and there are 324 more dwellings to come. Last year, Council contributed a further \$10 million to the Fund.

The City of Sydney has also contributed over \$350,000 to support a dedicated Aboriginal Affordable Housing Engagement Coordinator to work with the three major Community Housing Providers operating in our area. This officer supports and helps attract new Indigenous tenancies. To date, the three providers have reported that 265 of their tenancies are now leased to Indigenous tenants.

We have also played an important role in advocating for social housing residents. We stood against the sale of houses in Millers Point and the Sirius building, a building purpose-built with 79 social housing units.

We're also continuing to advocate for the needs of social housing residents in the Waterloo Estate. The Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) originally proposed nine 40 storey towers and poor urban design that would have seen a tripling of the area's density with only 28 additional social housing dwellings. We put forward an alternative proposal that created a liveable environment with lower scale development, a park the size of Redfern Park and a significant increase in social and affordable housing. The proposal is now down to 3,000 dwellings (from 6,800) with just three towers and contains wider streets with more sunlight, provides improved amenity and requires a minimum 30 per cent social and 20 per cent affordable housing in perpetuity (including 10 per cent for First Nations) and 50 per cent market housing.

The City continues to work to support homeless people in our area. We invest more than \$2.2 million in reducing homelessness and its impacts each year and were the first council in Australia to establish a dedicated homelessness unit. During this term, we have assisted 1,194 people exit homelessness into long term housing and we've prevented an additional 1,466 from becoming homeless.

We've partnered with NSW Family and Community Services, NSW Police, St Vincents Homeless Health, Mission Australia, Neami National, Launchpad Youth Services and other specialist homelessness services to reduce homelessness in key areas including Woolloomooloo, Wentworth Park and Belmore Park.

Standing up for our community

The City continues to play an important role in advocating on behalf of our community for better outcomes at a State and Federal level.

In 2019 after fierce community resistance, the 237 metre Star Casino Ritz Carlton tower was rejected. This tower would have caused significant overshadowing of public spaces and change the character of Pyrmont forever.

The City is working with communities surrounding Blackwattle Bay to demand sensitive development of the Fish Market that promotes job growth, rather than development that squeezes as many people as possible between the Fish Market and free-flowing highway traffic.

The City has also worked with other capital cities to demand action from the Federal Government on housing affordability and to oppose supersized digital payphone billboards from Telstra being installed on City streets without consent.

I'm also particularly proud of the City's support for the YES campaign during the awful and unnecessary Marriage Equality plebiscite in 2017. We provided retail space for the YES campaign shop, flew rainbow flags from City buildings, flew banners encouraging Sydneysiders to vote yes and hosted thousands at Prince Alfred Park to celebrate when we heard the news that a majority of Australians supported Marriage Equality.

We then offered 100 days of free wedding bookings of City venues to same-sex couples following the passage of Marriage Amendment Act in the Federal Parliament.

The City has permanently marked that moment by naming the section of parkland where the community gathered to hear results “Equality Green” and earlier this year the City partnered with the Surry Hills Creative Precinct to establish a Rainbow Footpath on the site.

Supporting our cultural life

I am proud that our strong financial position has enabled Council to continue investing \$35 million each year to the cultural and creative life of our city.

Direct funding through our grants and sponsorship – over \$100 million in the last decade – is only one lever at our disposal. We know that the leadership we provide through our city planning, regulatory reform and the management of our property portfolio is also critical.

In 2017 we opened the East Sydney Community Arts Centre, a \$10 million transformation of the former Heffron Hall into a creative hub with space for cultural and community uses designed by Lahznimmo Architects.

In the next term of Council, we look forward to opening the City of Sydney Creative Studios, a \$25 million state-of-the-art creative centre for dance, theatre, music, film and visual arts facilities will be completed in the city centre following an agreement negotiated by the City and developer, Greenland Australia – it’s a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rate.

A major rejuvenation of Oxford Street is on the way after the City of Sydney agreed to lease three blocks of properties for 99 years to Ashemorgan group. Ashemorgan will provide 11,000 square metres of new creative and cultural space, night time options and rooftop bars.

This work will complement our investment in the Foley Street retail spaces, launched in 2017 as a part of the Oxford Street Creative Spaces program.

In 2019 we introduced a new policy adopted which focuses on the impact of busking acts, rather than their type. This included separate protocols adopted for First Nations cultural practice in the public domain - no longer treated as busking which means approvals from the City are not required.

Public art is an important element of any city. In the last five years, we’ve installed Tracy Emin’s The Distance of Your Heart on Bridge Street, renewed Reiby Place with the piece Patchwork of Life, While I Live I Grow, a Green Square public artwork by Maria Fernanda Cardoso and temporary artworks like Maurice Goldberg and Matthew Aberline’s 40 Years of Love in Taylor Square and 12 Art and About projects.

Events delivered by the City – Lunar New Year, Christmas, New Years Eve and Art and About – continue to evolve and have grown significantly under this Council’s leadership. At the same time, we’ve been able to provide significant support for some of Sydney’s major festival and events such as Sydney Festival, Sydney Film Festival, Sydney Writers Festival and The Biennale.

In 2019, we worked in partnership with the Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin and the Fringe Festival to support a trial of Fringe HQ, a multi-level arts and performance space in the former World Bar in Kings Cross.

The City of Sydney continued its long standing support of Sydney Mardi Gras this term as they adapted to ever-changing Covid restrictions. In 2019 we were also able to open the Rainbow Crossing at Taylor Square and support Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with a \$50,000 cash to support their successful bid for World Pride 2023.

We want to make sure that our libraries play a central role in the community and respond to changes in population and technology so we've upgraded our existing libraries and are building new ones. Green Square Library Plaza opened in early 2018 and Darling Exchange Library is part of a new building designed by Japanese Architect Kengo Kuma and Associates that opened in 2019.

To keep the iconic Customs House in public hands, the City purchased the 174 year old building from the Federal Government.

The City purchased 119 Redfern Street for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural hub in 2018. The fitout is underway and we look forward to opening this facility during the next term of Council.

The City is in the midst of creating a 9-kilometre harbour foreshore walk that highlights Aboriginal history and culture. Named "Yananurala" – which translates to Walking on Country – the signposted walk will include audio and text-based installations and public artworks that recognise and celebrate local Aboriginal community, language, culture, resilience and connection to Country and the harbour.

The key artwork 'bara' by Judy Watson will sit on the Tarpeian Lawn above Dubbagullee (Bennelong Point). It will be a tribute to the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and will become one of the most significant artworks in Sydney's history. We look forward to unveiling this artwork with the community when Covid restrictions allow.

The City is deeply committed to Reconciliation in partnership with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and in 2015 adopted our inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. In 2016, the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan was adopted. The City's three-year Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was adopted in November 2020.

Working in Partnerships

I would like to thank the many members of our advisory panels and reference groups who have worked with Councillors and City staff to achieve these remarkable outcomes.

This includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, Better Building Partnership, Central Sydney Planning Committee, Chinese New Year Advisory Panel, City Switch National Steering Group, Curatorial Advisory Panel, Cycling Advisory Committee, Design Advisory Panel, Eora Journey Public Art Working Group, Green Living Centre Reference Committee, Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel, Late Night Premises Reference Group, Live Music Live Performance Taskforce, Mid-Tier Industry Reference Group, Night Time City Operations Group, Night Time City Transport Working Group, Public Art Advisory Panel, Residential Apartment Sustainability Reference Group, Retail Advisory Panel, Safe Space Steering Group, Social Sustainability Taskforce and Sustainability Strategy Reference Group.

I would also like to thank the tens of thousands of people – residents, workers, business owners, representatives of the not for profit and business sectors and Government representatives – who have shared their knowledge and advice and who have been active and engaged contributors to our city. The important feedback from across our community shapes our policy and informs the detail of how projects are designed and implemented.

I would also like to acknowledge the importance of the City's participation in international collaborations such as the C40 Climate Leadership Group and the 100 Resilient Cities Program.

Sydney was announced as a member of the 100 Resilient Cities network in late 2014. This initiative pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges of the 21st century. We are now working collaboratively with Councils from across metropolitan Sydney, as well as the NSW government, to develop the Resilient Sydney strategy.

I want to thank Councillors for your contributions and especially those Councillors not seeking re-election – Councillors Craig Chung and Kerry Phelp, and Councillor Christine Forster who has served for two terms.

Importantly, I want to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of City staff over this term. We have benefitted from having dedicated and expert staff, led by our effective and inspiring Chief Executive Officer Monica Barone and our committed and talented group of Directors.

Thank you to the Chief Executive Officer, Directors and all staff for all your hard work and expert advice and commitment to our common goals of Sustainable Sydney 2030 and 2050.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council acknowledge the contributions of all City Councillors, City of Sydney staff, partners, community members, and all who have worked constructively to achieve a better city.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor