

Item 3.4

Support for WorldPride 2023

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

On 24 June 2022 I joined with the LGBTIQ+ community and its friends and supporters at Sydney Opera House for the launch of the official program for WorldPride 2023. The date was significant – it was the 44th anniversary of the first Gay Mardi Gras (as it was then known) in 1978.

It was a fantastic event celebrated with the creation of a human progress pride flag on the Opera House steps. I am pleased that City staff were invited to be part of this ceremony.

WorldPride will be a time of celebration, a festival for the rainbow community and the wider Sydney community. It will be a time for Sydney to welcome visitors from regional NSW, interstate and overseas.

WorldPride's centrepiece will be the 45th Mardi Gras Parade, returning to its Oxford Street home after two years absence. With its 12,500 participants and over 200 floats, it will be the largest single Festival event. The WorldPride program includes their much-loved Mardi Gras events such as Fair Day and the post-Parade party, along with additional curated events. These include an opening Concert in the Sydney Domain, Rainbow Republic, a dance party to mark the end of WorldPride also in the Domain and a choir festival hosted by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir.

There is a strong First Nations focus, with a First Nations Gathering Space coming alive over six nights at Carriageworks and a Blak & Deadly Gala Concert in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. WorldPride will also bring a focus to our Asia-Pacific neighbours who do not enjoy the same level of equality and human rights as Australians.

The WorldPride program is more than these signature events. WorldPride Arts will feature over 60 individual experiences spanning contemporary art, dance, choirs, cabaret and literature. WorldPride Sports will be community sport on a rainbow scale, with over 20 different codes taking part. Pride Amplified is an open access program for LGBTIQ+ arts, culture, community, experiences and parties.

The Oxford Street neighbourhood will become the home of Pride Villages, with parts of Crown and Riley Street closed to allow for stalls, performances, dining and a place to connect with friends and family in between WorldPride events. On WorldPride's final weekend (4 to 5 March 2023), Oxford Street from College Street to Flinders Street will be closed for once-in-a-lifetime street party.

WorldPride will spotlight the continued fight for equality – particularly for trans and gender diverse people. On Sunday 5 March 2023 50,000 people are expected to join the Pride March across the Sydney Harbour Bridge which will amplify the demand for equality not only in Australia, but for all LGBTIQ+ people around the world.

A three-day Human Rights Conference will shine a spotlight on global, regional and domestic human rights issues facing people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and variations in sex characteristics.

As a pre-cursor to WorldPride Council has an exciting opportunity to be the first capital city Council in Australia to affirm the Darlington Statement, a joint statement made in March 2017 by Australian and New Zealand intersex organisations. Affirming the Darlington Statement would support a pathway to genuine inclusion of this community and demonstrate the City's support for all of our diverse communities and demonstrate the City's continuing commitment to inclusion to all who participate in WorldPride.

On 14 September 2022, City staff and I were briefed by WorldPride on the extent of this program. Its scale and appeal will not only celebrate our LGBTIQ+ community. It will be an extraordinary opportunity to re-charge and kick-start our cultural life, our economy, particularly those sectors that were so hard hit by the Covid pandemic. Given this scale, I propose Council ask the Chief Executive Officer to investigate other ways the City can provide support for WorldPride 2023.

It is essential every step is taken to ensure that WorldPride is a safe, particularly given the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and the emergence of the monkeypox virus. In July, the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich MP, wrote to the Federal Minister for Health, Mark Butler MP requesting that action be taken to approve and secure a supply of monkeypox vaccine. A limited supply was secured and set aside those at highest risk.

While this is welcome, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations has emphasised the need to secure other vaccines. It is equally important to support the work of ACON Health in informing people at high risk about preventing the contraction and spread of monkeypox. Above all, it is crucial that the response to monkey pox be led by health experts and the affected communities.

The City has supported WorldPride since the proposal to bid for Sydney to host it, providing sponsorship totalling \$800,000 in cash and \$650,000 value in kind.

The City's support extends beyond this sponsorship. Our staff are working with WorldPride to support Pride Villages. We are encouraging retail businesses to activate and dress their shops. We will be flying WorldPride, Mardi Gras and Progress Pride banners across the City.

It is crucial that WorldPride has an impact beyond the 17 days of the Festival. Work to ensure this is already underway with the development of an LGBTIQ+ Place Strategy for Oxford Street. In May this year Council unanimously approved a \$283,500 cash grant to Qtopia Sydney Limited to assist it established to permanent LGBTIQ+ museum, preferably at the site of the former Darlinghurst Police Station, preceded by an interim museum in the Oxford Street precinct during Sydney WorldPride.

I am pleased to inform Council that the City is seeking community feedback on a proposal to lease the Green Park bandstand to Qtopia for community, cultural, educational and social use. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, Qtopia should be able to open an interim museum before WorldPride begins.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council commend Sydney World Pride Limited on the breadth, scale and diversity of its program for WorldPride 2023;
- (B) Council support all actions to ensure WorldPride is a safe event, particularly given the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and the emergence of the monkeypox virus, noting that these actions should be led by health experts and the affected communities;
- (C) Council affirm the Darlington Statement as shown at Attachment A to the subject Minute;
- (D) Council note the additional support the City is providing for WorldPride 2023 as set out in the subject Minute;
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate other ways the City can provide support for WorldPride 2023 and report back to Council; and
- (F) note the proposal for Qtopia to establish an interim LGBTIQ+ museum in the Green Park bandstand, Darlinghurst.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Attachments

Attachment A. Darlington Statement