

Item 11.4

Notices of Motion

Extension of Free Hire of Community Spaces for Local Community Groups

By Councillor Ellsmore

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note that:

- (i) the City of Sydney is currently undertaking a consultation with the community about the activities and services in the City of Sydney's community centres and libraries, with comments due by 15 December 2022;
- (ii) Council included in the 2022/23 budget that venue hire be waived, and public liability insurance coverage be provided for free, for local community groups.
- (iii) the Council decision provided free use of community halls, meeting rooms and other community spaces for not for profit groups, where a group resides in or provides services largely to communities in the City of Sydney. That is: incorporated associations and unincorporated associations whose membership base and purpose is within the City of Sydney Local Government Area. Government agencies, political parties, and groups who do not reflect the Inclusion and Equity principles in the City of Sydney's Community Strategic Plan and other City of Sydney plans such as our Reconciliation Action Plan and Inclusion (Disability) Plan are not included;
- (iv) this measure was one a number of measures which have been implemented by Council to support the community to recover post-Covid. Other initiatives which had been implemented included parking fee suspension, commercial and community rent waivers and fee waivers for outdoor dining permits;
- (v) fee and other Council income waivers in 2022/23 amount to more than \$6 million. The fee waiver for free community uses for one year is estimated to cost Council \$170,000;
- (vi) to date, Council staff and Councillors have received strong positive feedback about the free hire for local community groups; and
- (vii) Council is also implementing a number of other measures to increase access to its community spaces, including through streamlined booking processes and increased staffing;

(B) Council further note that:

- (i) at the 21 November 2022 Council meeting, Council received a report back on the public exhibition of the Outdoor Dining Policy and guidelines;
- (ii) Council resolved to include in the draft budget an extension of the outdoor dining program for an additional two years, until 30 June 2025, at a cost of approximately \$4 million in revenue foregone; and

- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to include in the next draft budget to be submitted to Council for endorsement to go on public exhibition an extension of the free use of community centres, town halls and other community spaces by community groups; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer also be requested to provide advice on any relevant policy or procedural implications for the Council, if Council were to remove hire fees - as opposed to make hire subject to a fee which is then waived or reduced - and any other relevant issues, including how Council currently balances competing hire requests.

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