

Item 12.2

Notices of Motion

Let's Get On With Town Hall Square

By Councillor Scott

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) Town Hall Square was first proposed in the 1980s, by then Lord Mayor Doug Sutherland;
- (ii) in 2007, Jan Gehl's landmark 'Public Spaces, Public Life' study recommended the creation of a new Town Hall Square (part 2, page 76) which was subsequently included in the Sustainable Sydney 2030 and 2050 plans;
- (iii) in 2019, the Lord Mayor said the new Town Hall Square would happen '*over the next ten years*';
- (iv) on 6 December 2019, the Australian Financial Review noted that the Lord Mayor has previously said that the purchase of all of the properties would be by negotiation where possible but otherwise they would be by compulsory acquisition;
- (v) on 18 May 2020, the Lord Mayor and her team voted to give Woolworths a ten-year lease, risking the timeframe for a new Town Hall Square within ten years;
- (vi) on 2 November 2021, the Lord Mayor stated in City News, that "We'll prioritise plans for a new Town Hall Square opposite Sydney Town Hall, on a site now occupied by the Woolworths building. A new square is at the heart of Sydney's future civic centre, imagined as a contemporary space for public life and civic activity";
- (vii) on 10 May 2023, the Sydney Morning Herald editorialised, "We're so jaded about big public projects in Sydney that it can be hard to get excited about them; witness the Cahill Expressway high line or [the City's own failed "Cloud Arch" art installation](#). We believe them when we see them. But we should be excited about this project and do everything possible to make it happen quickly. Sydney needs and deserves it";
- (viii) on 15 May 2023, the Lord Mayor and her team voted to extend the commercial and retail leases of the buildings required for the construction of a new Town Hall Square until 2035, creating further hurdles for the realisation of this much needed civic space at the heart of Sydney;
- (ix) on his recent visit, internationally acclaimed architect and urbanist and recipient of the keys to the City of Sydney, Jan Gehl, continued to advocate for the establishment of new civic spaces in the City of Sydney, including Town Hall Square opposite the Town Hall;

- (x) Paddock Landscape Architects described Town Hall Square as "... Sydney's living room, a place for people to gather, pause, participate, or protest"; and
 - (xi) the creation of Town Hall Square is now likely to be commenced more than 50 years after it was first proposed; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to provide Council with a costed public domain plan for Town Hall Square, with a commencement date, for consideration by May 2024.

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