

Item 3.1

Vale Ignatius Jones AM

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I wish to inform Council of the passing of former New Year's Eve Creative Director, Ignatius Jones AM on 7 May 2024 in Manila, Philippines.

Ignatius was born Juan Ignacio Rafaelo Lorenzo Trápaga y Esteban on 24 October 1957 to Basque-Chinese father, Nestor Juan Trápaga, and a Catalan-American mother, Margot in Singalong, Manila, Philippines. Two brothers followed. In 1963, the family migrated to Australia. His sister Monica, later an entertainer and Play School presenter, was born two years later.

After completing his high school education at St Ignatius' College, Riverview, several careers followed.

Ignatius initially attracted attention as founding member and lead singer of "shock rock" band Jimmy and the Boys formed in 1976. Involvement with other bands followed, including Pardon me Boys, a short-lived Australian swing jazz-cabaret band he formed with his sister Monica.

His experience with Australia's live music scene led him to journalism, initially writing for R.A.M (Rock Australia Magazine), The Edge and Stiletto, a pop culture and fashion magazine, which he also edited.

His career further expanded in the 1980s and 1990s, working as an actor in film and television, an onscreen reporter and interviewer for SVS-TV's Culture Shock, writing two books, 'True Hip' and the 1992 'True Hip Manual' and directing children's videos featuring his sister Monica and her band, Monica and the Moochers.

In the late 1990s, he devised the Olympic Journey Begins, a roadshow leading up to the 2000 Sydney Olympics. It visited 27 cities and towns reaching audiences totalling three million people.

In 1996, he was appointed the City's New Year's Eve Creative Director, a position he held until 2002. The Sydney Morning Herald credited him with transforming the final night of the year into the biggest annual event in Australia and an international pyrotechnic benchmark. He devised spectacular effects using the Harbour Bridge, including the giant Eternity sign and the Harbour of Light Marine Lantern Parade with designer Peter England.

In 2001, the City received a formal request from East Timor's Minister for External Affairs and Information, Dr Jose Ramos Horta seeking help with their Independence celebrations in May 2002.

On 11 February 2002, Council unanimously agreed to contribute to \$90,716 to the East Timor Independence Celebrations. This contribution enabled Ignatius and New Year's Eve Production Manager, Ed Wilkinson to travel to East Timor to devise and stage this historically significant event. It was a rare instance of a creative practitioner directing the "opening night of a country".

Ignatius continued to work on major events in Australia and overseas, including directing ceremonies for the 2002 Sydney Gay Games, the Doha 2006 Asian Games and the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

He was creative director of Vivid Sydney from 2011 to 2019 and artistic director of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parades between 2011 and 2015.

Ignatius' contribution has been recognised with many awards. He shared in the inaugural Helpmann Award in 2001 for Best Event - 2000 Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the 2003 Sydney Star Observer Pride Week Award for his work on the Sydney Gay Games Opening Ceremony.

He was honoured with the Filipino-Australian of the Year Award 2014 by the Filipino Communities Council of Australia, a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017 at the Australian Event Awards and in 2019 he was appointed Member of the Order of Australia "for significant service to entertainment as a writer, director, author and performer."

In October 2018, Ignatius married his long-time partner, Novy Bereber, retiring to live with him in the Philippines in 2022.

When Ignatius greeted the audience of 38,000 at the 2002 Gay Games Opening Ceremony he said: "Australia and the gay and lesbian community is not so much a melting pot ... We are more of a mixed salad, where every part remains separate, yet adds to the wonder of the whole ... I have been lucky, I have never had to come out, I was never in."

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of Ignatius Jones AM and his significant contribution to Sydney's and Australia's cultural life and events industry;
- (B) Council express its condolences to Ignatius Jones' family; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to convey Council's condolences to Ignatius' husband, Novy Bereber, his mother, Margot Martin, his brother Luis Miguel and his sisters, Rocio and Monica.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor