

Item 14.3

Notices of Motion

Prayer at Council Meetings

By Councillor Thompson

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note, as per the 2021 census, that:
 - (i) a majority, of residents living in the City of Sydney answered that they did not hold any religious beliefs; and
 - (ii) among those who did hold religious beliefs, there was wide diversity of religions represented in our diverse, multicultural city, including, but not limited to, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism;
- (B) Council note that:
 - (i) the Local Government Act 1993 provides that a Councillor must consider the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community;
 - (ii) Council's practice of starting meetings with a prayer does not reflect the religiously diverse and secular communities we represent; and
 - (iii) many councils across the country are moving towards secular affirmations to formally open their meetings to ensure no one is excluded from proceedings; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) undertake a process of community engagement, inviting submissions from local residents, to understand community views regarding the recitation of a prayer before Council meetings, including whether the prayer should be:
 - (a) retained as a prayer in its current or altered form; or
 - (b) abolished and replaced with a secular oath or affirmation in line with Councillors' responsibilities to the communities we represent; or
 - (c) removed without replacement; and
 - (ii) based on this community consultation, and in order to ensure Council represents the diversity of interests and needs of our municipal community, bring to Council options regarding whether to retain the prayer in its current or an altered form, replace the prayer with an alternative oath or affirmation, or remove the prayer without replacement.

X113760