Item 12.4

Notices of Motion

Coordinating Utilities for Better Street and Community Outcomes

By Councillor Miller

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

(i) the City of Sydney's Community Strategic Plan (Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision) clearly outlines the importance of public street and footpath spaces to accommodate safe pedestrian and vehicle access, outdoor dining, landscaping and urban greening;

(ii) each year the City invests millions of dollars into public domain, road, footpath and cycleway renewals and upgrades in line with the Sydney Streets Design Code and Technical Specifications;

(iii) the NSW Streets Opening Coordination Council (SOCC) is a voluntary association of member organisations that seeks to improve the coordination of works in the public domain to minimise disruption arising from the installation, operation and maintenance of utility services; currently it provides 2 guides designed to coordinate public works, however these are non-statutory;

(iv) for renewal and upgrade projects, City staff consult with authorities such as Ausgrid, Sydney Water, Telstra and gas utilities to notify them of upcoming works, however utilities do not require council approval for their work which can involve tree removal, temporary asphalting of the street and prolonged street closures;

(v) community concerns have been raised about the lack of notification, significant delays, removal of trees, waste and poor management of projects specifically in Wilson Street, Newtown; and

(vi) a lack of effective policy settings that compels utilities to coordinate and communicate street and public domain works has resulted in loss of amenity, prolonged delays and expensive restoration processes, where the City is forced to 'fix' streets where utility work has been undertaken;

(B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to report back via a CEO Update advising what measures are in place to coordinate with utility providers for undertaking works and other initiatives that may be underway to improve outcomes for the community; and

(C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to NSW Minister for Water, Rose Jackson, NSW Minister for Energy, Penny Sharpe, and the Federal Minister for Telecommunications, Michelle Rowland calling for:

(i) a review of existing policy that results in greater accountability, integration and communication between utility companies and councils;

(ii) greater oversight and accountability of contractors undertaking work on behalf of companies; and

(iii) a centralised mechanism to coordinate works and for the community to request information and report issues.

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