
Minutes of Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7 April 2020

Meeting commenced at 6.32PM

Present:

Darcy Byrne	Mayor
Vittoria Raciti	Deputy Mayor
Marghanita Da Cruz	Councillor
Mark Drury	Councillor
Lucille McKenna OAM	Councillor
Colin Hesse	Councillor
Sam Iskandar	Councillor
Tom Kiat	Councillor
Pauline Lockie	Councillor
Victor Macri	Councillor
Julie Passas	Councillor
Rochelle Porteous	Councillor
John Stamolis	Councillor
Louise Steer	Councillor
Anna York	Councillor
Michael Deegan	Chief Executive Officer
Elizabeth Richardson	Chief Operating Officer, Director Development and Recreation
Ian Naylor	Manager Governance
Katherine Paixao	Governance Coordinator

APOLOGIES: Nil

DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS: Nil

Clr Iskandar entered the meeting at 6.43pm
Clr Passas left the meeting at 7.00pm
Clr Passas returned to the Meeting at 7.43pm
Clr Passas retired from the Meeting at 8:04 pm.

C0420(1) Item 1 Mayoral Minute: Actions to Address Community Concerns around COVID-19

Motion: (Byrne)

THAT Council:

- 1. Expresses great gratitude and thanks to the citizens of the Inner West, the officers of Inner West Council and all of the health and emergency services personnel who have dedicated themselves to saving lives and protecting public health during this crisis.**
 - a) Officially convey the thanks of all Councillors to Council officers for their professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and protecting our community.**
- 2. Notes the detailed contingency planning that has been completed and enacted by Council officers since the onset of the crisis, and the commitment to maintenance of frontline services.**
 - a) Note the actions of the Incident Management Team (See Attachment 1) and convey the thanks of all Councillors to members of the IMT for their**

professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and protecting our community; and

- b) Officially convey the thanks of all Councillors to the officers of NSW Health, NSW Police and members of all the other agencies who have collaborated with the IMT on a daily basis, which has been vital in responding to the crisis and protecting our community.**
- 3. Request the CEO prepares a report on the budgetary impacts of the crisis and a preliminary plan for amendments to regulations, fees and rates as well as economic recovery in the Inner West to be tabled at the April 28 Ordinary meeting (noting that this report may need to be tabled late and can be provided to Councillors any time up to and including April 26). The report should include updates and recommendations on the following:**
- a) The impact on Council's revenue and expenditure, including the additional expenditures identified through this resolution;**
 - b) The process for preparing and adopting the upcoming Budget, including the potential for deferral of the Budget;**
 - c) Any identified adverse budget impacts from relief measures adopted by the State or Federal Governments, where strong advocacy from Council is required to represent the needs of local government and local services (e.g. childcare);**
 - d) A review of the hardship policy for business and residential rates and recommendations on how they need to be amended to meet the current circumstances;**
 - e) A review of rental and evictions policy for tenants of Council properties with an immediate deferral of rental payments for affected businesses and organisations until this report is tabled and a new policy adopted;**
 - f) Consideration of how public car parking could be made free for the healthcare workers in line with the request from the Health Services Union;**
 - g) Sporting clubs not be charged fees for sporting fields and facilities that are closed and unable to be used during this crisis;**
 - h) Establishing an Inner West Recovery Taskforce, to be chaired by the CEO and including local business leaders from a variety of sectors and community organisations, to plan and coordinate the economic recovery of the Inner West as well as maximise the local effect and delivery of State and Federal relief and stimulus measures;**
 - i) Practical assistance for local businesses seeking to reopen in coming months to be informed by consultations with local Chambers of Commerce and local businesses on what assistance from Council would be useful, within the fiscal and budgetary constraints, as a result of the crisis;**
 - j) An outline of how infrastructure renewal works to improve footpaths, curb and guttering, roads, parks and recreation facilities can be brought forward and expedited. Consideration should also be given to how this**

- program could be expanded should Federal and State funds be made available for local stimulus;
- k) How existing grants programs could be expanded and redeployed to support local organisations in responding to the crisis;
 - l) The extension of the delivery and acquittal timeframes for approved grant recipients to complete funded projects. Where necessary, the nature of the projects themselves might need to be amended;
 - m) A regional approach to recovery of creative industries be developed in partnership with the City of Sydney and other major metropolitan Councils. An initial teleconference with leaders of the Inner West Arts and Cultural sectors, including Council's advisory committee be convened by the Mayor to gain their input into immediate priorities, with the outcomes to be tabled as part of the report to Council; and
 - n) Consideration of reallocation of funding for EDGE and other arts grant programs to support the recovery of the arts sector.
4. Thank NSW Health, the NSW Police and other critical service providers for their collaboration in responding to the crisis and commits to further depending these partnerships to address ongoing challenges.
- a) Notes the anticipated exacerbation of a range of health and safety issues as a result of the crisis and the requirement of isolation including drug and alcohol abuse, domestic and family violence, and mental ill-health.
5. Thank the local NGOs and charities working to provide outreach services to older people and vulnerable citizens and that the Mayor writes to them requesting their partnership in coordinating our efforts to address food security, outreach services and volunteer mobilisation.
- a) Notes the regular information sharing teleconferences and collaboration between the Mayor and the Inner West's NGO and charities sector;
 - b) Notes the advice received from the local charitable and not-for-profit sectors that food insecurity is rapidly emerging as a challenge for their existing clients, as well as low income families, pensioners and many casual workers who have lost their jobs;
 - c) Allocates \$250,000 as an initial investment in establishing a large-scale volunteer coordination service in the Inner West, aimed at mobilising the community to help alleviate hunger and isolation. The program would be auspiced by local NGOs, including but not limited to Addison Road Community Centre, the Exodus Foundation, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Inner West Neighbour Aid, Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, St Vinnies Rozelle and the Asylum Seekers Centre. Following consultation with the sector, a report with the details of the plan and confirmation of the auspicing organisations be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting; and
 - d) Notes and accepts the offer from the Play for Lives campaign to partner with the Inner West to pilot their national campaign here with the goal of mobilising sports club members to volunteer to assist local NGOs and charities (See Attachment 2).

- 6. Thank Council's Early Childhood Educators for their professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and:**
 - a) Makes urgent representations to the Federal and State Governments noting the assessment of the United Services Union and Local Government NSW (LGNSW) that under the new funding arrangements announced last week Council-run early childhood education services are not properly funded and are at risk of being unviable;**
 - b) Reiterates Council's commitment to our high-quality Council-run children's and family services, and the staff, and notes that families accessing these services should have equal access to childcare services, fee relief and enrollment options as that of families enrolled in privately-run centres;**
 - c) Receive an update, to be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting, including any additional information received on childcare funding; and**
 - d) Convenes regular information sharing teleconferences and collaboration between Council and Inner West childcare providers.**

- 7. Notes the vital importance of communication with the community and between community members during the crisis, recognises Council's leadership role in facilitating this, and undertakes the following actions immediately:**
 - a) Makes Inner West Council's social media channels available, upon request, to not-for-profit community organisations and local service providers to promote resources, services, donations and volunteerism in response to the crisis;**
 - b) The Mayor to write to all residents explaining the ways that Council can assist them during the crisis and include information about local resources that are available to them, this should be done through letterboxing rather than direct mail. A "Hi Neighbour" postcard based on that already distributed by City of Canada Bay Council and other Councils (See Attachment 3) should be included in the distribution;**
 - c) Recognise the need for information to be made accessible in community languages and liaise with Multicultural NSW and local ethnic community organisations to make sure that Council's communication of health and other messages are accessible to all;**
 - d) Note the cancellation of the paper edition of the Inner West Courier by News Corp Australia;**
 - e) Write to the NSW Government seeking clarification about how Council's statutory notification requirements can be carried out as there is no longer a local newspaper to advertise in;**
 - f) Discontinue all existing advertising with the Inner West Courier and reallocate those budgeted funds to resource Council's ongoing communication with the community during the crisis in the first instance and to communications generally in subsequent budgets;**
 - g) Allocate \$20,000 to social media expenditure to promote critical information and public health messages through the crisis;**

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- h) Collaborate with Australia at Home (See Attachment 4), the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, community radio and other relevant bodies on a partnership to utilise new methods of communication to ensure our Inner West community is informed and connected during the crisis, with a report on the potential partnership to be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting;**
 - i) Liaise with the local RSLs about ways to conduct ANZAC Day commemorations with the population in isolation;**
 - j) Condemn in the strongest terms the hurtful and racist remarks and actions targeted at people of Asian descent amid the Covid-19 outbreak; and**
 - k) Express our deepest sympathies and condolences to all nations, particularly those who have suffered a significant number of deaths during the pandemic.**
- 8. Aims to be an employer of best practice in dealing with the crisis, recognising that Council officers are our most important asset and are in need of support. To this end, a report to be prepared for the April 28 Council meeting addressing the following:**
- a) Support for casual staff, and how to achieve the goal of maintaining existing staff levels;**
 - b) Redeployment of staff whose work has been reduced or disrupted to other useful roles particularly combatting social isolation and supporting community organisations;**
 - c) Expansion of the Employee Assistance program to address any emerging mental health and other needs of staff; and**
 - d) How the successful collaboration between the Executive and the United Services Union and other industrial organisations can be further strengthened to aid Council's response to the crisis.**
- 9. Recognises that the closure of libraries and recreation facilities has greatly impacted on the local community, particularly vulnerable populations, and seeks to ameliorate this through the migration of services online:**
- a) Seek to make library programming, recreation, arts and other relevant sections accessible online and through virtual methods with the specific aim of combating social isolation particularly among older residents, parents and children, people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A report on the implementation of this to be prepared for the April 28 Ordinary meeting.**
- 10. The Mayor write immediately to relevant Federal and State Government Ministers and agencies to advocate on the following critical issues that have emerged:**
- a) The need for the JobKeeper payment or other subsidy to be extended to Council employees in business areas affected by the crisis, including childcare and aquatics;**
 - b) The need for a local government stimulus strategy with Federal and State**

investment and incentives for all local governments to bring forward infrastructure renewal works to generate employment in local communities;

- c) The need to expedite state government requirement of Council in relation to procurement and approval of work so that infra schedules can be brought forward. And to review existing Loan mechanism, so that infrastructure schedules can be brought forward;
- d) The need for intervention by the NSW Government to provide certainty and protection to residential and commercial tenants;
- e) The need for local parks to remain open, accessible and usable for everyone, particularly in the context of our local government area where many people are only able to access open space outside their home. It is outside the remit of Council rangers to enforce physical distancing directives; and
- f) The need for immediate investment of funding for the NGO and charitable sectors to enable them to meet increased demand for food aid and outreach services.

11. Maintain the adopted schedule of Council meetings and briefings with the following adjustments:

- a) The April 14 Council meeting should be deferred to April 21 and dedicated to motions of notice from Councillors;
- b) For the duration of the crisis, business pertaining to Council's response and essential services will be prioritised and completed at Council meetings prior to motions on notice being considered;
- c) Tuesday evenings on weeks without a Council meeting be allocated to briefing sessions;
- d) A draft forward plan of reports from Council officers be tabled at the first Ordinary Council meeting in May for adoption; and
- e) The schedule of meetings to be reviewed at the end of June.

12. Write to the Premier expressing great concern about the even greater impacts on Inner West residents and business from Westconnex and Western Harbour Tunnel construction works during the crisis and insisting on an immediate briefing for Councillors from the Projects Managers to discuss mitigation; and

13. Inner West Council to contact local government bodies (ALGA, LGNSW and SSROC) to identify any areas for cooperation and collaboration.

Motion Carried

For Motion: Crs Byrne, Da Cruz, Drury, Hesse, Iskandar, Kiat, Lockie, Macri, McKenna OAM, Porteous, Raciti, Stamolis, Steer and York

Against Motion: Nil

Absent: Cr Passas

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.