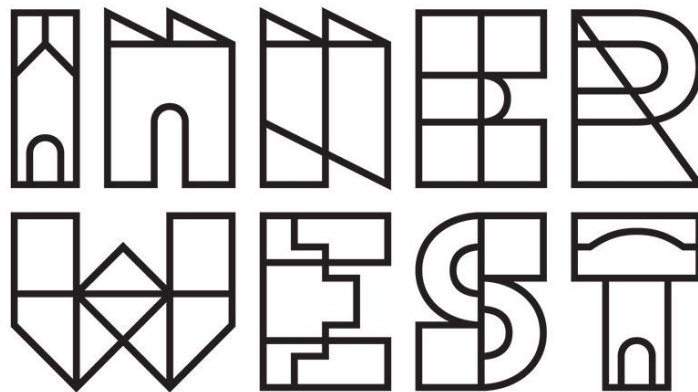


SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA 3

Distributed on 20 June 2023



COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023

6.30pm

Location Ashfield Service Centre, 260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

MEETING AGENDA – PRECIS SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

The following reports appear as late items as information required for the preparation of the reports was not available at the time of distribution of the Business Paper.

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Item No: C0623(1) Item 59
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: DAMAGING INCREASE IN EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY COSTS
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

Item 59

MOTION

1. That Council writes to the Treasurer, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Minister for Local Government and local State Member(s):
 - a) Expressing Council's strong opposition to the NSW Government's last minute decision to impose an enormous Emergency Services Levy (ESL) cost increase on councils for 2023/24 by scrapping the ESL subsidy for councils and at a time after Council has publicly advertised its Operational Plan and annual budget to the community;
 - b) Noting that as a consequence of the unannounced 73% increase in the State Emergency Service budget and an 18% increase in the Fire and Rescue NSW budget, Council's 3.7% rate increase to provide essential community services and infrastructure has been significantly eroded.
 - c) Advising that the Government's decision may/will lead to a reduction in important local services and/or the cancellation of necessary infrastructure projects;
 - d) Calling on the NSW Government to take immediate action to:
 - i. restore the ESL subsidy in 2023/24;
 - ii. urgently introduce legislation to decouple the ESL from the rate peg to enable councils to recover the full cost; AND
 - iii. develop a fairer, more transparent and financially sustainable method of funding critically important emergency services in consultation with local government.
2. That Council writes to the Chair of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) advising that Council's forced emergency services contribution is manifestly disproportionate to the 2023/24 rate cap, which has resulted in additional financial stress.
3. That Council writes to the President of LGNSW seeking the Association's ongoing advocacy to bring about a relief in the burden of Councils' emergency services contribution.

Background

I am calling on Councillors to support representations to the NSW Government in response to the highly damaging increase in the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) imposed on all councils without warning for the 2023/24 financial year.

The ESL is a cost imposed on councils and insurance policy holders to fund the emergency services budget in NSW. The majority is paid as part of insurance premiums, with a further

11.7 per cent funded by councils and 14.6% by the NSW Government. The ESL represents cost shifting at its worse, as it is imposed on councils without any mechanism for councils to recover costs.

The levy increase for the State's 128 councils in 2023/24 amounts to almost \$77 million, with the total cost imposed on the local government sector increasing from \$143 million in the current financial year to \$219 million next year. This represents a 53.1% increase, completely dwarfing the IPART baseline rate peg of 3.7% for 2023/24, and Council's rate increase of 3.7%.

Reporting suggests that the increase in costs this year reflects a 73% increase in the State Emergency Service budget and an 18.5% funding increase to Fire and Rescue NSW. The impact of these large increases on councils' finances will be particularly severe in 2023/24 as a result of the NSW Government deciding to scrap the subsidy for council ESL payments.

For many councils, the unexpected cost hit will absorb almost all of their IPART-approved rate rise for this year and in some cases absorb more than 100%. This is placing local government budgets under enormous pressure as they struggle from the combined impact of the pandemic, extreme weather events, high inflation and wage increases.

IPART-approved rate rises are intended to compensate for the impacts of inflation and increases in council costs. Instead, the rate increase will have to be largely diverted to the significantly higher ESL payments this year. NSW councils will have no option other than to make cuts to infrastructure and services expenditure.

For Inner West Council, the impact of the ESL increase with no subsidy offset is \$1.7M for 2023/24, bringing the total Council contribution to \$5.8M. This amounts to 38% of the expected increase in rate income for 2023/24. If the NSW Government's decision is not reversed, this will have an impact on Council's services, infrastructure maintenance and delivery.

The timing of this development is particularly challenging for councils as it comes so late in the local government budgeting cycle, well after IPART's rate determination for the coming financial year.

All councils strongly support a well-funded emergency services sector and the critical contribution of emergency services workers and volunteers (many of whom are councillors and council staff). However, it is essential that these services be supported through an equitable, transparent and sustainable funding model.

Local Government NSW has raised the serious concerns of the local government sector with the NSW Government and is seeking the support of councils across NSW in amplifying this advocacy.

This Mayoral Minute recommends that Council call on the NSW Government to take immediate action to:

- a) restore the ESL subsidy,
- b) decouple the ESL from the rate peg to enable councils to recover the full cost
- c) develop a fairer, more transparent and financially sustainable method of funding critically important emergency services.

The Mayoral Minute also recommends that Council write to IPART advising of the financial sustainability impacts on of the ESL.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 60
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: IAN MCCANN
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

That Council thank Ian McCann for his work for Council during the past 37 years of service with Inner West Council and Leichhardt Council.

Background

Last month Ian McCann left Inner West Council after 37 years.

Ian joined Leichhardt Council in 1986 as part of the Parks Team. He later moved into the waste services team progressing to a waste inspector, then to coordinator of the waste team and was finally made responsible for all depot staff at Leichhardt Council.

After amalgamation he progressed into his role as Senior Manager Operations responsible for more than 320 staff across waste, civil works, parks and streetscapes.

Ian was instrumental in the formative years of Inner West Council. He was also the inaugural chair of the Inner West Staff Consultative Committee.

Ian is a remarkable person who has always been able to see others' points of view and break down many of the complex issues that arose during amalgamation. He has excelled in engaging members of the community when problems arose in the operations area.

I know leaving Inner West council was a difficult decision, after growing up within the Inner West. He has shown tremendous loyalty by working for our community over his 37 years.

I would like to extend my thanks on behalf of Councillors, staff and the community for the service that Ian has offered over her 37 years and I would like to wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 61
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: THE RETIREMENT OF PETER KAYE AM
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

- 1. That Council congratulates Peter Kay on his 40 years as an SES Unit Commander and 47 years as an SES Volunteer.**
 - 2. That Council hold a civic reception in his honour in August 2023.**
-

Background

Peter Kaye AM has performed exceptional and exemplary service as a Local Controller and Unit Commander of the SES for over 40 years and as an SES volunteer for over 47 years with distinction.

Peter is highly regarded by the local community, elected representatives and senior SES management. He regularly attends key community functions such as citizenship ceremonies, Australia Day celebrations, Official Openings and taskforces. Peter has chaired several community consultation committees ranging from local policing to the bike pathways and Convenor of the Hawthorn Canal Conservation Project.

In his time as an SES Unit Commander Peter has been responsible for relocating and establishing the Unit in 5 locations. Often on a very limited budget and without any State Funds, Peter has managed to ensure effective and professional premises for the SES members to train and undertake operations in service of the people of the Inner West.

As well as his dedicated and exemplary leadership with the SES, Peter has also been recognised for his other substantial volunteering for national and international charities

For these leadership and volunteer efforts Peter was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2014 and in the same year he was Ashfield Council's Australia Day Citizen of the Year.

Peter has also received recognition from the SES with several Awards and citations including:

- National Service Medal, with 2 bars
- SES Long Service Medal, with 4 bars
- Commissioner's Commendation for Service
- NSW SES Commissioner's Unit Citation (30 years of public safety on NY Eve)
- Commissioner's Letter of Recognition (60th Anniversary Committee)
- National Emergency Medal, Cyclone Debbie

Peter's time as a local volunteer will come to a close in August 2023 and to recognise this tremendous achievement I seek to hold a civic reception in his honour.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 62
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: FIRST NATIONS RESPONSE
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

- 1. That Council provide a grant of \$10 000 to First Nations Response to replace the stock that was lost due to flooding issues at Council's property. The funding source is to be identified through the next quarterly budget review.**
- 2. That Council commit to delivering an engineering solution to the ongoing issue of water entering the Midjurburi community room adjacent to Steele Park, Marrickville.**
- 3. That Council report on the finalisation of a license or lease agreement for First Nations Response to continue using the premises.**

Background

First Nations Response is a grassroots organisation run by two local Aboriginal women who founded an online community network and then started volunteering to source food and other basic goods to local Aboriginal families during the pandemic and lockdowns. The organisation is focussed on providing Aboriginal elders and families with food and household products to offset the cost of living in the current economic climate.

They work across the Inner West and City of Sydney providing support and receiving donations of food from Oz Harvest and other local food providers.

Council provides accommodation for the organisation at the Midjurburi community room at Steele Park in Marrickville.

In December 2022 the unusually heavy rain led to the premises at Marrickville being flooded and 100 Christmas hampers and other goods made unusable. The cost of these losses to the organisation was approximately \$10 000.

Council should continue to support First Nations Response.

I propose that Council make available a sum of \$10 000 to help the organisation get back on its feet.

The group has also advised that other heavy rain fall events since then have led to water getting into the property at times.

It is important that Council seek to ensure the suitability and availability of this space for the group.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 63
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: INNER WEST THEATRE GUILD
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

That Council promote the inaugural performances of the new Inner West Theatre Guild at Petersham Town Hall through all Council's communications channels including the Council newsletter and social media.

Background

The recently formed Inner West Theatre Guild has been successful in proposing through Council's expression of interest process for the creative use of town halls in securing Petersham Town Hall for an upcoming performance of the Wizard of Oz, the musical. The Guild is a not for profit entity.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 64
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: EASTON PARK SAFETY & AMENITY
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

1. That Council investigate the establishment of a pedestrian crossing on Denison Street Rozelle connecting to Easton Park. This should include an on-site community consultation with interested residents, with the results of the investigation to be reported to the Traffic Committee.
 2. That Council consult with local residents about improvements to the furniture, garden beds and other amenities at the park and report back to Councillors on how these improvements can be funded through existing operational budgets.
-

Background

Recently Council completed the renovation of the Easton Park sporting field.

At the opening event residents approached me requesting further improvements to the park for non-sporting users as well as investigation of a pedestrian crossing on Denison Street to ensure safe access to the park for local children.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

Item No: C0623(1) Item 65
Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE: ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT CLUBS
From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

MOTION

That Council receive a report on how the Council can partner with local not-for-profit clubs to assist them in becoming less reliant on poker machine revenue and more financially sustainable. This should include options for how Council could assist clubs with expanding arts and music offerings, planning to improve their facilities and in applying for state and federal government funding to upgrade their premises.

Background

Local not-for-profit clubs are vital local institutions that provide important recreational services, community facilities and lower cost hospitality options for Inner West citizens.

Many clubs are seeking to transform their business practices to be less reliant on revenue from poker machines and achieve financial sustainability through offering more arts and music events and improved spaces for community events.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.