

Resolution of Council

17 November 2025

Item 14.2

The 50th Anniversary of The Dismissal

Moved by Councillor Arkins, seconded by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) on 11 November 1975, Governor-General Sir John Kerr dismissed the Government of Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, ending one of the most significant chapters in Australia's democratic and political history;
- (ii) the Dismissal was a defining moment in the evolution of Australia's constitutional system, sparking enduring debate about the powers of the Crown, the role of the Senate, and the independence of Australia's democracy;
- (iii) the Whitlam Government's legacy includes major social and economic reforms, including the establishment of Medibank (later Medicare), the introduction of free tertiary education, recognition of First Nations land rights, no-fault divorce, equal pay for women, and the creation of the Department of Urban and Regional Development - a forerunner to the planning frameworks and laws that continue to shape our city today;
- (iv) the Whitlam Government also made landmark investments in arts, culture, and local government, including direct funding to councils and arts programs, supporting the foundations of Australia's creative and community infrastructure; and
- (v) fifty years on, the Dismissal remains a reminder of both the fragility and the resilience of our democratic institutions, and of the enduring impact of visionary reform on Australian civic life;

(B) Council:

- (i) acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Dismissal of the Whitlam Government on 11 November 1975 as a pivotal event in Australian democratic history;
- (ii) recognise the profound and lasting impact of the Whitlam Government's reforms on Australian society, particularly in health, education, equality, culture, and urban development; and
- (iii) note that the City of Sydney's cultural and civic landscape continues to reflect many of the values championed during the Whitlam era, including equity, participation, protecting our environment and investment in the arts and creative communities; and

(C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to:

- (i) the Whitlam Institute at Western Sydney University, Emeritus Professor Jenny Hocking, and the National Archives of Australia, acknowledging the 50th anniversary and expressing the City's appreciation for their work in preserving and interpreting this important period of Australian history; and
- (ii) the National Library of Australia congratulating them on their exhibition 1975: Living in the Seventies, recognising the exhibition's contribution to commemorating this important year in Australia's political history.

Carried unanimously.

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