

## Resolution of Council

**23 February 2026**

### **Item 12.15**

#### **Fair Conditions in the Cruise Industry using Sydney Harbour**

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Thompson –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) Sydney Harbour is home to numerous cruise liners from all around the world;
- (ii) Carnival Cruise Line is one of the largest cruise line companies operating in Australian waters, and internationally. Carnival Cruise Line currently has 2 vessels home-ported in Sydney, the Carnival Adventure, and the Carnival Splendor;
- (iii) a number of Councillors in the City of Sydney have been made aware of alleged systematic, and ongoing, industrial exploitation of Carnival Cruise Line workers on Australian-based vessels;
- (iv) the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) have indicated that Carnival crew members are regularly transported to Australia, by the company, and provided with short-term, insecure contracts. Workers are commonly brought in from countries such as Indonesia, India and the Philippines. They are transported immediately to Circular Quay where they join the ship, and then sail the Australian coast for a short-term contract of around 9 months, before being driven back to the airport where they are flown home;
- (v) the MUA advises that crew members on these contractual arrangements report wages of as little as \$2.50 per hour, worker hours exceeding 10 hours per day with no penalty rates, and have reports of crew working months without a day off;
- (vi) the MUA has reported that whistle-blowers have told them about cramped living conditions, contributing to a high incidence of disease amongst crew - particularly skin infections, and company doctors requiring crew to work while sick;

- (vii) these workers don't have the protection of minimum wages and conditions which would be offered to Australian workers under Australian industrial systems. The MUA has been advocating for Carnival Cruise Line to negotiate an International Transport Worker's Federation agreement which would significantly improve the pay and conditions of the workforce; and
  - (viii) these vessels are sailing the Australian coast, using Australian ports, carrying Australian passengers and charging Australian fares. The workforce on board, and broader community, should expect Australian industrial standards;
- (B) Council also note:
- (i) the City of Sydney has consistently advocated for the protection and extension of human rights, including labour rights, and is committed to its obligations under Modern Slavery Legislation;
  - (ii) these obligations include an ethical, reputational, and financial imperative to prevent Modern Slavery in all its forms and set the highest possible standard to safeguard human rights;
  - (iii) earlier this year the City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore, and the City of Melbourne Lord Mayor of Mayor, wrote to Carnival Cruise Line expressing concern about the human rights and conditions of cruise line workers; and
  - (iv) Melbourne Councillors are considering what support the council currently offers to Carnival Cruises, and whether this should be withdrawn or revised;
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate if the City of Sydney provides any support to Carnival Cruises through City policy or programs and report back to Council via a CEO Update. This may include tourism support; and
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Catherine King in support of the proposal that Coastal Trading Act 2012 exemptions, provided to Australian home-ported Cruise Ships, be made conditional on the provision of fair working conditions, such as those proscribed by the International Transport Workers' Federation Agreement.

Carried unanimously.

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