

Item 3.5

Support for Free Sundays at Qtopia

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

On 23 February 2024, I was joined by the Prime Minister and the NSW Premier to officially open Qtopia Sydney.

Over 2 weeks later, on 11 March 2024, Council unanimously agreed to support free entry on Sundays to Qtopia Sydney for its first year with a sponsorship of \$100,000.

The Free Sundays initiative has been a stunning success, with over 10,000 visitors passing through Qtopia's doors in the first year, with many patrons also visiting local businesses.

Qtopia has now approached me asking whether the City would sponsor free Sundays for a further 12 months. I am proposing that Council provide this support, not only because of the success of free Sundays, but Qtopia's other achievements in its first year.

Qtopia Sydney is more than a museum and has described itself as a "centre for queer history and culture". It has achieved this by creating exhibition spaces in the former Darlinghurst Police Station, converting the Police Station loading dock into a theatre, using the former substation as an exhibition/performance space and turning the former underground toilets into another exhibition space.

This has enabled Qtopia to mount 19 exhibitions and present 87 productions in its first 12 months. One of its exhibitions received 2 awards, while another was nominated. The live productions attracted a total audience of around 9,000 across 276 performances. The Loading Dock Theatre was used as the Queer Hub during the Sydney Fringe Festival.

Education is another of Qtopia's key roles. In 2024, it created 8 corporate programs, with 34 groups using them. It also developed 4 school programs, with 2 programs linked to the school curriculum. One of these has been approved by the NSW Department of Education and another is awaiting approval. The programs commenced in October 2024 and will continue this year augmented by a rural and regional schools incursion program beginning in April. Qtopia expects that 8,000 school students will take part in these programs during 2025.

Much of this has been achieved with the support of active and engaged volunteers. As of December last year, Qtopia had 521 registered volunteers who have contributed a total of around 6,500 hours since it opened.

Qtopia will continue to build on these achievements. Five exhibitions will open this month. A further 12 exhibitions are planned for the first floor of the Police Station when the building works are completed. Fourteen productions have already been announced for 2025. Qtopia will also participate in Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Gays and Gags Comedy Festival, Pride Fest 2025 and the 2025 Sydney Fringe Festival.

These achievements and planned activities merit Qtopia receiving continued sponsorship from the City.

Recommendation

It is resolved that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to bring a report to Council as soon as possible about renewing the City's sponsorship of Qtopia Sydney to enable it to provide free entry on Sundays for further 12 months.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor