

Item 10.8

Notices of Motion

Helping the Community Stay Cool - Opening Up Community Spaces During Hot Days This Summer

By Councillor Ellsmore

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) climate change is leading to an increase in extreme weather events in our cities;
- (ii) due to its position, Australia, and the Greater Sydney Region are particularly impacted by extreme weather events such as prolonged heat waves, an increase in extreme fire weather and an increase in flooding. Under projected emissions, Sydney could experience an increase of extreme heat days (over 35°C) by 10 to 18, annually by 2050;
- (iii) heatwaves are Australia's most deadly natural disaster, claiming more lives than any other natural hazard in the country;
- (iv) heat risks are highest for some groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people, those with chronic health conditions, and young children;
- (v) the health risks associated with climate are closely linked to socio-economic status. The increasing occurrence of heat waves is an equity issue;
- (vi) renters and public housing tenants are at particular risk, where they live in housing that is not well insulated or airconditioned;
- (vii) the City of Sydney has the highest proportion of renters in NSW (60.7%). Many renting and public housing households do not have adequate options for cooling their homes. A recent report found 75% of renting households report cutting back on cooling to reduce energy costs due to the cost of living; and
- (viii) in heat emergencies, access to safe and accessible spaces to stay cool is crucial to help people healthy;

(B) Council further note:

- (i) the City of Sydney adopted the *Resilience Strategy 2023-2028* in November 2023. The Resilience Strategy:
 - (a) reports that during shocks, including extreme weather, many people feel safe at local council facilities (including community centres, libraries and aquatic centres), indoor air-conditioned spaces and at local green spaces. This is particularly the case for groups who don't live in safe, secure or airconditioned homes; and

- (b) includes actions to support the local community to cope with increased heat, and to enhance community facilities to assist priority communities who require additional support during shock events;
 - (ii) the City of Sydney has a range of programs to support people at risk in extreme weather events and hot days. This includes the award-winning Mobile Cooling Hubs, a program to support people sleeping rough, which is delivered in partnership with St Vincent's Health Network, Sydney University and the University of Technology Sydney; and
 - (iii) the City of Sydney has recently trialled keeping libraries open later for students studying for their HSC; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) consider whether it would be possible to pilot late or extended opening hours for one or more of Council's air-conditioned and accessible, indoor community spaces (such as a library or community centre) as a heat relief space over the summer; and
 - (ii) investigate the budget implications of extended and night-time opening hours for staffed libraries and community centres (as heat relief spaces) for Council's consideration as part of the preparation of the 2026/27 Budget and Operational Plan.

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