
Minutes of the Council Meeting 20 May 2020

Meeting commenced at 6:30pm

Present:

Steve Christou (Mayor)	Councillor
Eddy Sarkis (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor (arrived 6:50pm)
Ned Attie	Councillor
George Campbell	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Greg Cummings	Councillor
Glenn Elmore	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Paul Garrard	Councillor
Ola Hamed	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Kun Huang	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Lisa Lake	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Joseph Rahme	Councillor
Suman Saha	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Michael Zaiter	Councillor
Tom Zreika	Councillor (via web conferencing)
Hamish McNulty	General Manager
Melissa Attia	Acting Director Community and Organisation Development
Daniel Cavallo	Director Environment & Planning
Peter Fitzgerald	Director Works & Infrastructure
Richard Sheridan	Director Finance & Governance

Also Present:

Charlie Ayoub	Executive Manager Corporate Services
Colin McFadzean	Legal Counsel
Carol Karaki	Governance Coordinator
Laith Jammal	Governance Officer

Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was read by the Mayor, Councillor Christou.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Mayor, Councillor Christou opened the Meeting with the following Acknowledgement of Country:

“I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land – the Darug People, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.”

National Anthem

At this point in the meeting the Mayor, Councillor Christou asked all of those in attendance to stand for the playing of the Australian National Anthem.

Notice of Live Streaming of Council Meeting

The Mayor, Councillor Christou advised that the open session of the Council Meeting was being recorded and streamed live on Councils website, with a copy being archived and placed on Council's website. The Mayor further advised that the recording of the proceedings of the Council meeting was not permitted without the prior approval of Council.

Apologies/Leave of Absence

Nil

Declarations of Pecuniary & Non Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest

The General Manager declared a pecuniary interest in item C05/20-458 as the item directly related to his employment. As such, the General Manager indicated that he would be exiting the Chamber upon the consideration of this item.

Confirmation of Minutes

Min.671 C05/20-426 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council - 15 April 2020

Resolved (Garrard/Attie)

That Council confirm the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 April 2020.

Min.672 MM05/20-29 Mayoral Minute - Scheduling of Council Meetings during Covid-19

Resolved (Christou)

That Council as of June 2020, return to conducting Council meetings in accordance with the adopted *Code of Meeting Practice*, with remote meeting options continuing until Government restrictions around Covid-19 are lifted.

Public Forum

The Mayor, Councillor Christou advised that Council had received 15 public forum written submissions which the Council Officers had circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Mayor read out a summary of the submissions given the length and the number of submissions received as follows:

6 submissions were received for Item C05/20-439 Planning Proposal and Voluntary Planning Agreement for Building 3, 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands (Formerly Known As 1-11 Neil Street, Merrylands)	
Speakers	Summary
1. Ailsa Wang (Holroyd) 2. Yaween Sun (Merrylands) 3. Flerida Llarena (Merrylands) 4. Binuj Pradhan (Merrylands) 5. Saradi Nagaraj (Merrylands) 6. Yuan Da Chen (Merrylands)	All submissions received opposed the proposal for the following reasons: lack of parking, overshadowing, pedestrian access, privacy and traffic and pedestrian congestion.
1 submission was received for Item C05/20-441 Planning Proposal - 2-36 Church Street, Lidcombe	
Speaker	Summary
1. Saul Moran (Meadowbank)	The submission received encouraged Council to carefully consider the social housing benefits and the advice from the CLPP.
5 submissions were received for Item C05/20-446 Notice of Motion - 'Nobody Left Behind' Campaign	
Speakers	Summary
1. Miriam Pellicano (Granville) 2. Paul Moulds (Auburn) 3. Rebecca Langton (Surry Hills) 4. Chantelle Ogilvie-Ellis (Merrylands) 5. Carolina Gottardo (Westmead)	All submissions received supported of the Notice of Motion.
3 submissions were received in relation to Childcare Fees and Resourcing	
Speakers	Summary
1. Sharlyn Teo (Pemulwuy) 2. Michael McGowan (Pemulwuy) 3. Margaret Romeo (Greystanes)	2 submissions received queried and raised concerns in relation to the increase of childcare fees. 1 submission received queried the staffing and resourcing around Long Day Care Centres. The questions have been sent to the relevant Council Officers to respond.
All submissions received have been attached to the Minutes.	

Min.673 Items by Exception**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That Council adopt items C05/20-427, C05/20-431, C05/20-434, C05/20-435, C05/20-437, C05/20-438, C05/20-444, C05/20-445, C05/20-459 and C05/20-460 on the Council Agenda in bulk as per the recommendations in the reports.

Min.674 C05/20-427 Legal Report**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That Council receive this report.

Min.675 C05/20-431 Report on Outstanding Council Resolutions**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That Council receive this report.

Min.676 C05/20-434 Investment Report - April 2020**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That Council receive the 30 April Investment Report.

Min.677 C05/20-435 Proposed Granting of Easement through Monterey Street Park, South Wentworthville**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That:

1. In accordance with S. 377 (1)(h) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council approve the creation of an easement from the rear of 24 Monterey Street, South Wentworthville through part of Monterey St Park in accordance with DA2018/432, subject to an independent valuation and compensation being paid to Council.
2. The final easement location and design be subject to the expert advice of Council's Engineering team.
3. The easement approval be subject to concurrence from Sydney Water and public notice being undertaken.

Min.678 C05/20-437 Draft Sustainability Action Plan

Resolved (Cummings/Attie)

That Council place the Draft Sustainability Action Plan on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, with a report to be provided back to Council following the conclusion of the exhibition.

Min.679 C05/20-438 Proposed Cancellation of Cumberland Heritage Awards and Cumberland Heritage Rebate Program in 2020

Resolved (Cummings/Attie)

That Council:

1. Cancel the Cumberland Heritage Rebate Program and the Cumberland Heritage Awards in 2020, due to the current pandemic crisis.
2. Resume the Cumberland Heritage Rebate Program and the Cumberland Heritage Awards in 2021, if appropriate in the circumstances at that time.

Min.680 C05/20-444 Quarterly Progress Report on Council Consultative and Advisory Committees

Resolved (Cummings/Attie)

That Council receive the Draft Minutes of the Consultative and Advisory Committee meetings held as listed in the report and included under Attachments 1 to 3.

Min.681 C05/20-445 Cumberland Traffic Committee - Minutes of Electronic Meeting held on 1 April 2020 and Extraordinary Electronic Meeting held on 30 April 2020

Resolved (Cummings/Attie)

That the minutes of the Cumberland Traffic Committee electronic meeting held on 1 April 2020 and the extraordinary electronic meeting held on 30 April 2020, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Min.682 C05/20-459 Evaluation Report - Granville Park Community Sports Pavilion - Construction

Resolved (Cummings/Attie)

That Council:

1. Accept the Evaluation Panel's recommendation to award the contract to Belmadar Pty Ltd (ABN 53 156 053 351) in accordance with Clause 178(1)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005.

2. That a contract, inclusive of all value added considerations (alternative tender) to the value of \$7,800,444, be issued.
3. Delegate to the General Manager the authority to execute the contract and any associated documents.

Min.683 C05/20-460 Tender Evaluation Report - Granville Park, Field Reconstruction**Resolved (Cummings/Attie)**

That Council:

1. Accept the Tender Evaluation Panel's recommendation to award the contract to Delaney Civil (ABN 85 086 897 476) in accordance with Clause 178(1)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005.
2. That a contract to the value of \$1,499,943.00 (excluding GST) be issued.
3. Delegate to the General Manager the authority to execute the contract and any associated documents.

Min.684 C05/20-428 Cumberland City Council Community Grants Program Round Two 2019/2020**Motion (Attie/Garrard)**

That the matter be deferred until post Covid-19.

Amendment (Elmore/Saha)

That Council:

1. Adopt the 40 applications recommended for funding in Attachment 1 and allocate \$152,132 from the Cumberland Community Grants Program budget 2019/2020.
2. Advise all applicants under Round Two of the Community Grants Program 2019/20 of funding allocations and provide feedback and support to applicants that were unsuccessful.
3. Withdraw any applications recommended for funding in 2019/2020 if the organisation has not provided compulsory information to Council to enable payment before the end of the financial year.
4. Adopt the revised Program Structure for the Cumberland Community Grants Program 2020/21 included under Attachment 3.

The Amendment moved by Councillor Elmore seconded by Councillor Saha on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Amendment: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Amendment: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

The Motion moved by Councillor Attie seconded by Councillor Garrard on being Put was declared CARRIED.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Min.685 C05/20-429 Emergency Relief Fund Applications

Resolved (Attie/Garrard)

That the matter be deferred until Covid-19 restrictions are eased for Council to consider the matter thoroughly.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor Rahme left the Meeting at 7:17pm and returned to the Meeting at 7:19pm during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Garrard left the Meeting at 7:18pm and returned to the Meeting at 7:22pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.686 C05/20-430 Quarter 3 Performance Report on the Operational Plan 2019-20 and Budget Review Statement

Note: The Acting Director Community and Organisation Development and the Director Finance and Governance presented a summary of the Quarter 3 Performance to Council.

Resolved (Saha/Sarkis)

That Council receive and note the Quarter 3 Service Area updates on the Operational Plan 2019-2020 and that the Quarter 3 budget notes be updated in the Quarterly Budget Review Statement.

Carried Unanimously

Councillor Rahme left the Meeting at 7:51pm and returned to the Meeting at 7:53pm during the consideration of this item.

C05/20-431 Report on Outstanding Council Resolutions

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Min.687 C05/20-432 Approval of Loans for COVID-19 Financial Crisis**Motion (Zaiter/Sarkis)**

That Council proceed with Option C as outlined in the Report; Combination option delay \$15m and achieve one-off \$5m salary savings – unrestricted cash will reach \$(3.0)m 30/6/21 and then \$19m by 2028/29.

Amendment (Elmore/Saha)

That Council:

1. Authorise an application for a loan of \$8 million under the Low Cost Loans Initiative program for the Wentworthville Pools Project, with the application to be signed off by the Mayor and General Manager on behalf of Council;
2. Subject to application approval, resolve to enter into a loan of \$8 million under the Low Cost Loans Initiative program;
3. Resolve to enter into a loan of \$12 million for Granville Multipurpose Centre; and
4. Authorise the Mayor and General Manager to execute the necessary loan documents on behalf of Council.

The Amendment moved by Councillor Elmore seconded by Councillor Saha on being Put was declared LOST on the casting vote of the Mayor.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Amendment: Campbell, Cummings, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Amendment: Attie, Christou, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

The Motion moved by Councillor Zaiter seconded by Councillor Sarkis on being Put was declared CARRIED on the casting vote of the Mayor.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Christou, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Campbell, Cummings, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Min.688 C05/20-433 Monthly Management Accounts as at 31 March 2020

Resolved (Saha/Elmore)

That Council receive the information contained in this report.

Carried Unanimously

C05/20-434 Investment Report - April 2020

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

C05/20-435 Proposed Granting of Easement through Monterey Street Park, South Wentworthville

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Min.689 C05/20-436 Draft Urban Tree Strategy

Resolved (Hamed/Garrard)

That Council place the Draft Urban Tree Strategy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, with a report to be provided back to Council following the conclusion of the exhibition.

Carried Unanimously

C05/20-437 Draft Sustainability Action Plan

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

C05/20-438 Proposed Cancellation of Cumberland Heritage Awards and Cumberland Heritage Rebate Program in 2020

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Min.690 C05/20-439 Planning Proposal and Voluntary Planning Agreement for Building 3, 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands (Formerly Known As 1-11 Neil Street, Merrylands)

Resolved (Rahme/Sarkis)

That Council:

1. Adopt the recommended planning controls for Building 3, 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands (formerly known as 1-11 Neil Street, Merrylands), and as previously resolved by Council, being:
 - a) a maximum building height of 50m apply to the south-eastern portion of the site; and
 - b) a maximum floor space ratio of 3.66:1 apply to the eastern portion of the site.
2. Endorse and delegate authority to the Mayor and the General Manager to execute the Voluntary Planning Agreement, on behalf of Council, for Building 3, 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands, as provided in Attachment 2.
3. Finalise the planning proposal, as delegated by the Minister, following execution of the Voluntary Planning Agreement and registration on title.
4. Note that this LEP amendment will be published in the Government Gazette upon finalisation.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Campbell, Christou, Cummings, Elmore Garrard, Hamed, Huang, Lake, Rahme, Saha, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Nil

Min.691 C05/20-440 Planning Proposal for 1 Crescent Street, Holroyd

Resolved (Garrard/Cummings)

That Council:

1. Note the status of the planning proposal for 1 Crescent St, Holroyd (former Caterpillar site), with a Gateway Determination issued by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel in July 2019.

2. Write to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, outlining Council's strategic and site specific concerns on the planning proposal.
3. Defer the delegation of authority to the General Manager to liaise with the proponent and government agencies on the details regarding the planning proposal, to ensure that the community's interests are represented as best as possible should the planning proposal proceed to finalisation for a period of one month.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Christou, Cummings, Elmore, Garrard, Hamed, Huang, Lake, Rahme, Saha, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Nil

Councillors Attie and Sarkis left the Meeting at 8:25pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.692 C05/20-441 Planning Proposal - 2-36 Church Street, Lidcombe

Note: The Mayor, Councillor Christou paused the meeting from 8:38pm to 8:40pm in order to allow Councillor Lake to reconnect to the meeting via the web conferencing application due to a fault in the connection.

Resolved (Lake/Zaiter)

That Council:

1. Endorse an amended planning proposal for the site that seeks to amend the *Auburn Local Environmental Plan 2010*, to:
 - a. Amend the Height of Building (HOB) control for the site from:
 - I. 14.9 metres to 22 metres
 - II. 16.9 metres to 32 metres
 - III. 22.9 metres to 40 metres
 - IV. 27 metres to 40 metres
 - b. Amend the Floor Space Ratio control for the site from 1:29:1, 1.49:1, 2.49:1 and 2.6:1 to 3.2:1.
2. Endorse that the planning proposal for 2-36 Church Street, Lidcombe, be forwarded to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for a Gateway Determination.
3. Prepare a Voluntary Planning Agreement to derive public benefit, should a Gateway Determination be received.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Cummings, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake, Rahme, Saha, Zaiter and Zreika.
Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Christou and Garrard.

Min.693 C05/20-442 Proposed Quanne Diec Playground in New Glasgow Park

Resolved (Rahme/Hamed)

That Council:

1. Name the children's playground in New Glasgow Park, Quanne's Playground; and
2. Install a small plinth with a plaque acknowledging the new name of the playground.

Carried Unanimously

Councillors Attie and Sarkis returned to the Meeting at 8:41pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.694 C05/20-443 Response to Matter of Urgency - Cumberland Local Traffic Committee Terms of Reference

Motion (Garrard/Sarkis)

That Council:

1. Adopt the Draft Cumberland City Council Local Traffic Committee Terms of Reference as attached.
2. Confirm the appointments of voting member and alternate voting member on the Cumberland City Council Traffic Committee, in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Amendment (Campbell/Lake)

That a point 3 be added as follows:

That, in the Terms of Reference of the Cumberland City Council Local Traffic Committee, the following items be moved from Part 1 to Part 2:
“(d) Parking Series....etc” except for “No Stopping” signs in relation to statutory distances at intersections and “Works Zone”.
And “One Way”, “Left Turn” and “Right Turn”.

The Amendment moved by Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Lake on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Amendment: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Amendment: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

The Motion moved by Councillor Garrard seconded by Councillor Sarkis on being Put was declared CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Zaiter left the Meeting at 8:45pm and returned to the Meeting at 8:46pm during the consideration of this item.

C05/20-444 Quarterly Progress Report on Council Consultative and Advisory Committees

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

C05/20-445 Cumberland Traffic Committee - Minutes of Electronic Meeting held on 1 April 2020 and Extraordinary Electronic Meeting held on 30 April 2020

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Min.695 C05/20-446 Notice of Motion - 'Nobody Left Behind' Campaign

Motion (Hamed/Campbell)

That Council:

1. Council acknowledge the 'Nobody Left Behind' campaign.
2. Council sign on to the Refugee Council of Australia's open letter to the Australian Government which asks that all people in Australia are protected from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 by:
 - a. ensuring all people have access to medical treatment and Medicare for people seeking asylum;
 - b. ensuring all people have a financial safety net so they are not forced into destitution; and
 - c. preventing people from losing legal status and access to support.
3. The open letter be sent to Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, Minister for Social Services Anne Ruston and Minister for Finance Mathias Cormann, as well as local State and Federal MPs.

The Motion moved by Councillor Hamed seconded by Councillor Campbell on being Put was declared LOST on the casting vote of the Mayor.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake, Saha and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis and Zaiter.

Councillor Cummings left the Meeting at 8:59pm and returned to the Meeting at 9:10pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.696 C05/20-447 Notice of Motion - Program Supporting International Students

Motion (Saha/Huang)

That:

1. Council write to the NSW Premier requesting that the NSW Government adopt a program to support international students who have lost their jobs because of Coronavirus (COVID-19).
2. Such a program be similar to the Victorian Government's "Working for Victoria" program which is creating job opportunities for the unemployed that are suitable for international students to accept.

The Motion moved by Councillor Saha seconded by Councillor Huang on being Put was declared LOST on the casting vote of the Mayor.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Cummings, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Min.697 C05/20-448 Notice of Motion - Advertising

Motion (Elmore/Lake)

That Council immediately cease the publication of its Weekly News Update and Mayoral Message in Sydney-wide metropolitan newspapers.

The Motion moved by Councillor Elmore seconded by Councillor Lake on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Min.698 C05/20-449 Notice of Motion - Community Service Centre

Motion (Elmore/Hamed)

That:

1. The Merrylands Community Service Centre at Shop 1/205 Merrylands Rd Merrylands be closed immediately.
2. Upon relaxation of current relevant COVID19 restrictions, the customer service counter at the Merrylands Administration Building be opened and operate with appropriate protective screens and social distancing measures.

The Motion moved by Councillor Elmore seconded by Councillor Hamed on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor Sarkis left the Meeting at 9:50pm and returned to the Meeting at 9:52pm during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Zaiter left the Meeting at 9:54pm and returned to the Meeting at 9:56pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.699 Extension of Council Meeting

Resolved (Attie/Cummings)

That Council extend the time of the meeting by an additional 30 minutes to conclude at 10.30pm or if an item being discussed is unfinished at 10.30pm, at the conclusion of that item in accordance with clause 18.2 of the Code of Meeting Practice.

Min.700 C05/20-450 Notice of Motion - Stimulus Funds

Motion (Lake/Saha)

That the Mayor write to the Premier and Minister for Local Government imploring the NSW Government to look beyond its low-interest loans package to the provision of direct

funding to Councils for shovel-ready projects as an effective economic stimulus measure.

The Motion moved by Councillor Lake seconded by Councillor Saha on being Put was declared LOST on the casting vote of the Mayor.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Cummings, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Min.701 C05/20-451 Notice of Motion - Public Forum

Motion (Lake/Saha)

That during the COVID19 closure of Council's public gallery, Public Forum be extended to also permit the public to address Council through audio and audio-visual recordings of no longer than 3 minutes, as well as through written/email submissions.

The Motion moved by Councillor Lake seconded by Councillor Saha on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor Rahme left the Meeting at 10:20pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.702 C05/20-452 Notice of Motion - Revenue Generation Opportunities

Resolved (Garrard/Zaiter)

That Council be provided with a report which identifies additional revenue generation opportunities from existing Council owned and/or managed land holdings and property leasing portfolio.

Carried Unanimously

Min.703 C05/20-453 Notice of Motion - Council's Land in Lane Street and Veron Street, Wentworthville

Motion (Zaiter/Attie)

That Council:

1. Undertake an Expression of Interest process for the future use of Council's Land in Lane Street and Veron Street Wentworthville which encompass the Wentworthville Library, Community Centre and the car park east of Finlaysons Creek.
2. Be provided with a report of the outcomes to Council's meeting within 6 months.

Amendment (Lake/Saha)

“Omit 1 and 2

Insert

1. Note Action 2.2 of the *Cumberland Community Facilities Strategy 2019-2029* adopted 18 September 2019 to proceed with planning for the development of a community hub (incorporating library, multipurpose community centre and other functions) in Wentworthville Town Centre on the existing Wentworthville Library, Community Centre and Redgum Centre site;
2. Proceed with a feasibility study and master planning exercise of this site, in consultation with the community, using funds that are allocated for this purpose in the funding reservation from collected development contributions in the Holroyd Contributions Plan;
3. Report to Council at key milestones of this work;
4. Note the funds allocated to new Community and Library Facilities in the Schedule of Works in the Cumberland Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan; and
5. Following receipt of the above reports, CONSIDER options for the development of this site including the undertaking of an expression of interest process.”

The Amendment moved by Councillor Lake seconded by Councillor Saha on being Put was declared LOST.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Amendment: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor(s) Against the Amendment: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

The Motion moved by Councillor Zaiter seconded by Councillor Attie on being Put was declared CARRIED.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Rahme, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Campbell, Elmore, Hamed, Huang, Lake and Saha.

Councillor Rahme returned to the Meeting at 10:25pm during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Rahme left the Meeting at 10:28pm and returned to the Meeting at 10:30pm during the consideration of this item.

Min.704 Extraordinary Council Meeting – 27 May 2020

Note: The Mayor, Councillor Christou noted that given it was past 10:30pm, an extraordinary Council Meeting was required on Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 6pm to consider the remainder of the business from tonight's meeting.

Resolved (Zaiter/Cummings)

That Council hold an Extraordinary Council Meeting on Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 6pm to consider the business deferred from tonight's Council Meeting.

A division was called, the result of the division required in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice is as follows:

Councillor(s) For the Motion: Attie, Christou, Cummings, Garrard, Hamed, Huang, Lake, Rahme, Saha, Sarkis, Zaiter and Zreika.

Councillor(s) Against the Motion: Campbell and Elmore.

C05/20-454 Notice of Motion - New Commuter Car Park

This item has been deferred to the Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held on 27 May 2020.

C05/20-455 Notice of Motion - COVID-19 Testing Facilities

This item has been deferred to the Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held on 27 May 2020.

C05/20-456 Notice of Motion - Amendments to Code of Meeting Practice

This item has been deferred to the Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held on 27 May 2020.

C05/20-457 Questions on Notice - Submitted by Councillor Lake

The answers to these questions have been published in the Business Paper for this Ordinary Council Meeting (20 May 2020).

C05/20-458 Response to Mayoral Minute - Formalising Process for the Review of the General Manager's Performance

This item has been deferred to the Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held on 27 May 2020.

C05/20-459 Evaluation Report - Granville Park Community Sports Pavilion - Construction

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

C05/20-460 Tender Evaluation Report - Granville Park, Field Reconstruction

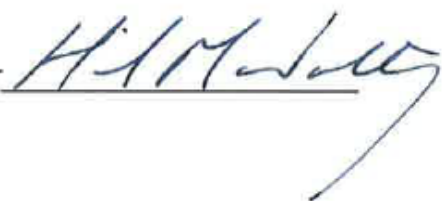
This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

The Mayor, Councillor Christou closed the meeting at 10:38pm.

Chairperson



General Manager



Written Submissions Received

Item C05/20-439 Planning Proposal and Voluntary Planning Agreement for Building 3, 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands (Formerly Known As 1-11 Neil Street, Merrylands)

Ailsa Wang

I heard of that there is a planning proposal for 20 – 22 Dressler Court Merrylands that is being reported to Council on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 for an additional 4 stories to added to the building which will be directly next to my apartment (1-7Neil Street, Hyrold). I am writing this email to raise my concern on this proposal. This proposal will make the building 16 stories tall blocking all of our views towards the east. With the current parking situation and the number of outstanding elements that remain to be fixed on our building I would say this is an unnecessary addition to a building. It will cause more parking issues in our area and cause overshadowing issues on our building too.

Please consider our view and feedback when you receive the proposal. Your thoughtful consideration would be highly appreciated.

Yaween Sun

For the statement that I would like to against the change of development for 20-22 Dressler court Merrylands.

For my concern the parking will be the biggest problem in our community. There's is already major issue going around our building. People blocking the fire exit, taking other people's private parking spot. The second concern is the traffic. As we all know at this point we only have one exit from our building and leading into a busy road. It cause a lot of danger while crossing the road. Also on Neil st the pedestrian is n a very bad condition. When it's raining the pass will get very muddy and very slippery. Also there are cars and trucks blocking the pedestrian. It is already hard for normal people to walk, some times I see parents with pram have to take there child and pram on to the road which has very fast vehicles to get pass. I don't think build three more levels can help current issues. The third issue is the view, while the building is getting taller it has completely blocking the view from our building and the gap between two buildings are so close if we leave our blinds open the people from that building can see our apartment and it has can course privacy problems.

Flerida Llarena

I would like to say no to the planning proposal for 20-22 Dressler Court Merrylands NSW 2160. There are three reasons why I am against it. First is that the building is next to ours which completely overshadows the east side. The second is the very limited parking space and third is oversupply of apartments which further contributes to congested environment.

Attached include picture of the said constructed site and other apartments surrounding our building.

Hoping for your kind consideration.

Binuj Pradhan

I would like to submit my submission through this email, so that you can present to the Cumberland Council Mayor. I would like to object to the approval of addition to building 20-22 Dressler Court, Merrylands, NSW 2160. As I am the resident of 24 Dressler Court, Merrylands; the reason for my objections are as follows:-

The proposed planning for an additional 4 stories to added to the building which will be directly next to ours building. This will make the building 16 stories tall blocking all of the views towards the east. With the current parking situation and the number of outstanding elements that remain to be fixed on our building. This will cause more parking issues in our area and cause overshadowing issues on our building too, let alone oversupply of apartments etc. More off street parking will be done as the increased density, hence congestion of the road will occur following more dumping of waste in surrounding area. Please feel free to contact me for further query. Kind regards,

Saradi Nagaraj

Hi, I am resident from 24 dressler court and we object or appeal not to approve the extra floors for the above address because it's going to block out view from everything and we don't even get to see any sunlight and there will be a lot of parking issues which is already on going there is no proper parking for the previous buildings only So i hope you oppose that proposal Thanks

Yuan Da Chen

I am writing to object the planning proposal for 20 – 22 Dressler Court Merrylands that is being reported to Council on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 for an additional 4 stories to added to the building which will be directly next to ours. This will make the building 16 stories tall blocking all of the views towards the east. With the current parking situation and the number of outstanding elements that remain to be fixed on our building I am strongly against this development.

Item C05/20-441 Planning Proposal - 2-36 Church Street, Lidcombe

Saul Moran

Dear Mr Mayor/ Councillors,

The property, 2-36 Church St Lidcombe offers a rare opportunity adjacent to the Lidcombe town centre and train station to provide an important, integrated and community residential development. It is an opportunity to provide vital social, affordable and integrated private Housing. The planning proposal seeks to optimise the social and private offer with minimal impact on the neighbouring area. The Billbergia and LAHC planning proposal will create an additional 218 dwellings and a childcare centre. The associated VPA will deliver approximately \$23 million in value, and includes the following additional public benefits:

- An additional 27 social housing units (taking those to 80 in total) to be retained by the landowner (LAHC) and operated under lease by appointed Community Housing Provider, Evolve Housing;
- Up to 124 affordable housing dwellings (subject to agreement with the CHP) to be owned and operated by the CHP (Evolve Housing) for the benefit of key workers, typically in health, education and public services such as the police force;
- A 60 place child care centre to be privately owned and operated; as a recognised need in the Council's Community Needs studies and
- Monetary contribution of \$7,900,000 to Council, for road upgrades and traffic improvements within the Lidcombe Town Centre. This Proposal will help to improve the flow of traffic, and enhance the public domain and pedestrian amenity of the Town Centre.

Evolve Housing have advised that there is a 5-10 year waiting list for affordable rental housing and a 10+ year waiting list for social housing in the local area. Statistics and experience indicate that this accommodation is particularly required by single women with children escaping domestic violence and 55+ seniors fighting homelessness through lack of employment and having no family support.

Although minimal within the greater demand, the provision of this additional housing is seen as a vital step towards meeting the underlying demand for such diverse accommodation. 2 To achieve these outcomes, the Planning Proposal seeks to amend the heights of building to range from 22m to 53m across the site, with an FSR of 4.21:1. This will deliver approximately 218 additional dwellings.

Council officers have put forward an alternative recommendation, reducing the heights and floor space proposed across 3 of the buildings by 3 storeys each (down to 40m), which would equate to removing 1:1 FSR or approximately 100-120 apartments. The Council officer's planning proposal would see a meaningful reduction in the number of social and affordable rental-housing dwellings that can be delivered, as well as a removal of the childcare centre., This loss equates to a circa \$10 million loss in VPA value, including a \$4 million reduction on the value created for local road upgrades.

The Cumberland Local Planning Panel accepted the Proponent's submission that there will be significant social benefit resulting from the additional heights and floor space proposed in the Planning Proposal as lodged. The Panel neither endorsed nor rejected the Planning Proposal, instead advising Council to weigh up the social benefits gained when making a decision.

It was highlighted that the Planning Proposal has been the subject of extended negotiation with Council, resulting in the proposed 53m maximum height. The Proponent's position is that there would be minimal adverse impact on the social and environmental amenity of the surrounding area, the impacts of overshadowing being 0.001% of area of the Rockwood Cemetery and Necropolis, if the planning proposal and VPA, as lodged, were to be approved. The Proponent, maintains that the corresponding increase in social benefit would far outweigh the minimal impact.

We urge the Councillors to carefully consider these statements, endorse the full value of the VPA, and ensure that the full value of social and public benefits are realised for the Lidcombe Community and for the Council, LAHC and prospective tenants in need.

Item C05/20-446 Notice of Motion - 'Nobody Left Behind' Campaign

Miriam Pellicano

Dear Council

St Francis Social Services T/A House of Welcome provides services for people seeking asylum in the Cumberland Council LGA, We write to you today to ask you to pass the motion for the "Nobody Left Behind" campaign, which seeks to provide safety nets for people seeking asylum during this COVID-19 crisis,

People seeking Asylum are being left behind

The House of Welcome, as a frontline service, holds grave concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 on people seeking asylum,

People seeking asylum remain ineligible for all Federal COVID-19 measures, including Jobseeker and Jobkeeper, and have not been included in recently announced packages supporting international students,

People seeking asylum are more likely to hold precarious work and live in crowded accommodation, Without an adequate safety net people will not be able to maintain safety measures such as physical distancing or self-isolation,

As recent events in Singapore and Germany highlight, failing to provide for vulnerable communities can undermine attempts to 'flatten the curve',

Since 2016 the House of Welcome (HoW) has been responding to the Federal Government Policy changes that have left people seeking asylum more vulnerable than ever, The changes to eligibility to the Status Resolution Services Support (SRSS) program means thousands of people seeking asylum are ineligible to access the financial safety net this program once provided,

For people seeking asylum who have found employment, they are over-represented in the casual work force, are under-employed or have undocumented work,

COVID-19 has had a substantive impact on industries that rely on a casual workforce, In the last six weeks House of Welcome has been contacted by 74 people who have experienced job losses due to the crisis,

Employment challenges will remain for people seeking asylum; as jobs become available most clients will be less competitive within a skilled, English speaking workforce also competing for the same roles, Since the implementation of the shutdowns House of welcome has seen:

An increase by 110% in requests for assistance for food assistance, rental arrears assistance and financial assistance;

50 people booked in for intake appointments across next two to assess for assistance packages.

There is an average of 30 new calls per day to triage;

Demand for food services has doubled in the last month. Currently delivering a face-to-face service to 170 people per week. 10 new intakes being processed weekly and put on the foodbank program and, where possible, to receive emergency financial assistance

Monthly emergency assistance financial distributions tripled across end-March -April.

Case study of a client in the Cumberland LGA

Mohammed and Sara arrived to Australia with their two young children in June 2019.

The family moved into overcrowded accommodation in Auburn, with the family of four occupying one bedroom in a two bedroom apartment, shared with another family.

House of Welcome was able to support this family with financial assistance for 4 months to prevent the family becoming homeless and destitute while Mohammed was looking for work.

Mohammed found work at a car wash, paying \$10-15/hour.

As the family were unable to access any Centre/ink or Government payments due to their visa status and SRSS changes, Mohammed had little choice but to accept this job even though this employment was exploitative and below the minimum wage.

Mohammed was working and paying his rent, and continued to be supported by House of Welcome foodbank program as the family was barely getting by. Due to COVID-19 crisis, Mohammed has now lost his job and has no source of income. Despite the moratorium on evictions, on 22/04/2020 Mohammed and his family received an eviction notice as they have been unable to pay their rent. The family are ineligible for any ongoing or one off Government payments and are at serious risk of homelessness and destitution.

House of Welcome has provided a one-off emergency payment to the family and continue to provide foodbank, but do not have the capacity to support the family financially long term.

Number of people seeking assistance from House of Welcome from Cumberland LGA

Impacts of job losses/no access to any other financial safety nets is directly impacting on destitution & homelessness.

During the last seven weeks House of Welcome has received an unprecedented number of calls seeking requests for assistance in areas such as rental arrears, food insecurity, need for crisis accommodation and financial distress.

64.7% of calls for assistance came from people seeking asylum in the Cumberland LGA, with 55.1% of requests for financial assistance coming from residents in the Cumberland LGA. House of Welcome has tripled the amount of Emergency Financial Assistance across this period with 34.6% of payments went to individuals/families living in Cumberland LGA, predominantly to cover rental arrears.

In the last month of April 2020, 52.5% of people who accessed our foodbank were living in Cumberland LGA, with over 170 distributions to families and individuals per week.

The ongoing economic impact of COVID-19 in Australia will be significant, and the ongoing financial strain for those in vulnerable communities will not abate with the end of the pandemic. It is critical that financial and legal safety nets are extended to people seeking asylum, to meet their basic needs, provide safety and access to legal support.

We therefore ask the Council to endorse the campaign and ensure that nobody gets left behind.

Paul Moulds

I am writing in support of the motion submitted by Councilor Hamed that seeks the endorsement of Cumberland Council for the Refugee Council led #NoBodyLeftBehind campaign, which is aimed at advocating to the Federal Government to improve services and support available for disadvantaged asylum seekers in our local community.

I am currently the Senior Pastor of The Salvation Army Christian congregation at Auburn Salvation Army and am also responsible for The Salvation Army's social and community work in this area.

Our organization has had to vastly increase its support and services to asylum seekers because of the desperate circumstances they find themselves in since the onset of COVID-19. The Salvation Army is currently housing and feeding a significant number of very vulnerable asylum seekers. This has put a huge burden on our services and finances at a time when public donations and support has been dramatically reduced because of restrictions on public fundraising due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While most of the asylum seekers we are helping do have work rights and were working prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority have lost their employment due to the business closures and the impact of the pandemic. Their visa status makes them ineligible for Government income support benefits, and changes to the eligibility criteria for the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program, that did once provide a safety net for asylum seekers, have made it impossible for them to successfully apply.

Cumberland Council is already aware many people seeking asylum are living in this Council area, and without the work of our charities and support agencies the rates of homelessness and people facing starvation in our community would now be very high. The Salvation Army at Auburn is currently providing free accommodation and weekly food parcels to increasing numbers of vulnerable people since the COVID-19 pandemic started, and people began losing their jobs. We can confirm that the most vulnerable of all, with almost no options for support, are those seeking asylum. Most of these are awaiting an appeal process for their applications, which can take many years.

The Auburn Salvation Army therefore fully supports Councilor Hamed's motion that draws the attention of the community to the plight of these vulnerable members of our community, and specifically asks that the Council call on the Federal Government to provide increased support to people seeking asylum including:

Access to Medicare

Income support for asylum seekers who have lost their jobs and access to the JobSeeker Payment for the duration of the pandemic,
Changing the eligibility criteria for SRSS to provide a safety net for people with no access to work or income

Valid visas – Ensuring visas are speedily renewed during this crisis to ensure people are not left in a situation where they are in the community with no valid visa.

Cumberland Council has always been a community that welcomes people from all nations and strives to create a place of safety and belonging. Your support for our work with vulnerable communities has been outstanding, and we ask that you stand with those on the front-line once again during this unprecedented crisis, and support this motion by Councilor Hamed.

The Federal Government has shown a willingness to introduce measure to protect and support our community and the vulnerable groups within it during this crisis. We are believing and hoping that this campaign, with the support of leading organisations and bodies like Cumberland Council, will lead the Federal Government to extending this support to one of our most vulnerable groups, that live in our community at Cumberland in significant numbers.

Councilors, help us to ensure no one is left behind,

Rebecca Langton

The impact of people seeking asylum being left with no financial safety net will be felt more intensely in Cumberland LGA than in any other community in Australia.

The Refugee Council of Australia estimates that the Cumberland LGA is home to more people seeking asylum than any other LGA in Australia – at least 10,000 of the national total of 96,952 (as at 31 March 2020)*

The Federal Government has taken tremendous efforts to ensure people in our communities do not fall through the cracks with the global COVID-19 pandemic.

However, for people seeking asylum there is no safety net. They are not eligible for the Jobkeeper and Jobseeker packages and cannot access social security payments. The recent drastic cuts to the Status Resolution Support Service, which can provide a basic living allowance for some people seeking asylum, means 95% of people seeking asylum are now no longer eligible for any

form of income support. Many are also excluded from accessing Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

As people seeking asylum lose their jobs due to the economic downturn, there is no safety net whatsoever to prevent them falling into destitution and homelessness, and many are unable to access healthcare through Medicare.

The Refugee Council of Australia calls on Cumberland Council to support the Nobody Left Behind campaign to ensure that the many thousands of people seeking asylum in Cumberland are not left destitute and at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of which will be felt by the entire community.

We ask Cumberland Council to sign on to the open letter from local Councils to the Prime Minister calling for a basic financial safety net for those out of work, access to Medicare, and for Bridging Visas not to be allowed to expire during this crisis period. 22 Councils have signed on to the letter so far nationally, including Canterbury-Bankstown, Ryde, Randwick and Inner West Councils. Mayors of Councils wanting to confirm their support for the letter can do so by completing this form: <https://forms.gle/eTk6HtQ3jNq9zH5bA>

If you wish to discuss please contact Rebecca Langton (manager@refugeecouncil.org.au)

*The Department of Home Affairs does not produce LGA figures for all people on Bridging Visas but does produce quarterly statistics by postcode for people on Bridging Visa E (those who originally arrived by boat). A comparison of postcode and LGA boundaries shows that 13.4% of all Bridging Visa E holders in Australia live in Cumberland LGA (1703 of the national total of 12,742). This represents 36% of all Bridging Visa E holders in NSW and is more than double the second highest total for any LGA in NSW (708 in Canterbury-Bankstown). By comparison, the second ranked LGA nationally is the City of Greater Dandenong in Victoria with 1157 people on Bridging Visa E. Even if just 10% of the 84,210 people seeking asylum on other Bridging Visas are in Cumberland LGA, the local asylum seeker population would exceed 10,000. If asylum seekers on all kinds of Bridging Visas in NSW living in different LGAs are similar to the figures for those on Bridging Visa E, the number living in Cumberland LGA would be around 14,400.

Chantelle Ogilvie-Ellis

Dear Council Members,

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed motion that Cumberland Council supports the Nobody Left Behind Campaign.

We are leaders of local religious organisations, ethnic communities and community organisations within the Cumberland LGA. In response to COVID-19, we have come together as the Local Organising Team of the Sydney Alliance – a non-partisan civil society coalition which brings together diverse organisations to work for the common good.

As members and leaders within the local Cumberland community, we are proud that our council strives to welcome all people, including those in special need, and support local residents to belong and succeed in Australia.

By supporting the Nobody Left Behind Campaign, Cumberland Council can continue to demonstrate these values and its commitment to the people of Cumberland during the COVID-19 pandemic. People seeking asylum in Cumberland LGA are experiencing crisis and destitution. People seeking asylum are our neighbours and members of our communities. According to the Council's 2018 homelessness report, more than 2700 people seeking asylum on bridging visas live in our LGA. They are part of our own faith and diaspora communities, volunteer organisations and community services – and they are currently in grave crisis. This submission includes 4 case studies, which are the stories of our own friends and neighbours.

Since the introduction of work rights for people seeking asylum living in the community in 2014, many people seeking asylum on Bridging Visas have been self-reliant. They have been rebuilding their lives through work, studying and paying taxes, and some have started small businesses which employ other Australians.

COVID-19 has taken away almost all of these jobs. People who were once self-reliant now have no form of income. They're ineligible for all Federal COVID-19 measures, and due to the changes in eligibility for the Federal Status Resolutions Support Scheme the vast majority have no access to any kind of Government income support. They fled persecution in their countries of origin and cannot go back.

They are unable to pay for rent, food, medication. As community leaders, workers and volunteers, we come face to face with this reality when people seeking asylum reach out to us for help as they run out of food, face eviction or are threatened with utility disconnection. We know that they are increasingly reliant on small overstretched charities, mostly run by faith organisations and diaspora communities. These charities are reporting an unprecedented and sustainable demand for support.

There is a hole in our safety net – and it compromises our whole community.

People seeking asylum are highly vulnerable to COVID-19. Our recent conversations with experts from the Public Health Association of Australia have confirmed this. Because of their increasing destitution, people seeking asylum need to take whatever work they can regardless of risk; many live in overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, sleep rough or couch surf.

They have a high incidence of other health issues but are less likely to receive medical care. Some have no Medicare, and very few have access to concession rates for medication. Because of a prior history of being turned away, most are unlikely to seek medical help. They are concentrated in areas flagged as a concern for community transmission, particularly in Cumberland LGA.

The example of Singapore shows that when one vulnerable group is neglected, the health of the whole community and the economy is at risk. Federal policy and decision makers have to deal with complex issues and often are not as close to the local and varied situation of communities. It is therefore critical that our Council expresses its concerns in favour of local residents and urges federal authorities to act. While Governments begin to look towards recovery, it is clear that the most vulnerable people in our area will not be able to get back on their feet without support. If support is not forthcoming, they will remain in poverty and destitution for the foreseeable future. In the absence of Federal action, local communities will bear the brunt of the medium and long term impacts of this gap.

We therefore ask our Council to decide in favour of motion C05/20-446 and act in support of people seeking asylum, their communities and friends in Cumberland LGA.

Sincerely

Sydney Alliance Local Organising Team, including:

Fr Peter Blayney and Sister Helen Cunningham - St Patrick's Catholic Church, Guildford

Hava Rezaie – Hazara community leader, Merrylands

Leonie Dyer – House of Welcome, Granville

Thomas Magri – Young Christian Workers, Granville

Richard and Maria Maguire, Unfolding Futures, Wentworthville

Chantelle Ogilvie-Ellis – Sydney Alliance, Merrylands resident

Appendix: Stories from our Cumberland community

Case study 1, Merrylands: Going without medication

I am a mother with 2 children. We came to Australia in 2013 as asylum seekers from Iran. My daughter 25 years old and my son is 32. Before COVID-19 I made money cleaning homes. I also volunteered for a Christian Church. Before coronavirus my son working as a painter in building and construction. My daughter was working as a cashier. This year, my daughter and I started studying at TAFE for the first time. Then after one month, we stopped because of coronavirus. During this time, we can't do anything. Now we are just following the rules and the distancing. For all of us, our employers haven't given us all the money that we worked for, but because we don't have a permanent visa we are scared to ask why. My rent is 2 months over due and I have \$1000 in overdue electricity bills over due. I don't receive any money Centrelink so I can't pay. I have anxiety about that. I also have diabetes but I can't afford my medication, or to see a specialist.

Case study 2, Auburn: "I can't sleep at night and I can't eat"

I came to Australia by boat from Afghanistan in 2012. I don't have any family here. I have work as a sole trader as a tiler to support myself and to send money to my family in Afghanistan because they need my support.

Before COVID-19 I was working for a tile company for a long time, but during the coronavirus time I was not able to go to work. The owner didn't pay me for my work, which was worth \$27 000. Because I don't have a permanent visa, I couldn't do anything. I can't pay my rent and bills, and owe money for company insurance. Now I can't sleep at night and I can't eat because of all of my problems. I don't have any hope.

Case study 3: "They are selling their car or their laptop for uni to buy food."

Najib came to Australia by boat when he was 16. When he first came he studied ESL in high school. After graduating he received a scholarship to study engineering at university. He also worked several days a week to support himself, first in a fibre glass company, and then in IT. In his spare hours volunteered as a student mentor and tutor for international students. "When the pandemic started, my workplace stopped. After 3 weeks they restarted work, but with our shifts cut back. Some weeks I get no work, sometimes I get one day. I've lost around 75% of my income."

As a result, Najib worries about his daily needs. He has been forced to rely on a friend to help pay for rent and food. "I don't really know to explain it, but I feel the stress and the strain on my mental health. I also have to keep up my online classes while trying to work out these difficulties. It's hard to do under pressure. You're always worried about what is going to happen in the next few weeks."

Najib doesn't have Medicare. Every visit to the GP costs \$75, more if tests are needed. He has health conditions that mean he should return to the doctor every two months, but is avoiding going because of the cost. "I can't afford it. I'm just thinking that more important is food and needs for living." "The important thing is that we've been working here for many years, and paying tax toward the Government. I can't return to the country I fled – I am in danger and my family doesn't live there any more. No one I know lives there." "A lot of other people I know on Bridging Visas have lost their jobs. They're hard working people, they saved their money and now they've used it. They are selling their car or their laptop for uni to buy food. Soon they will run out of things to sell."

Carolina Gottardo

JRS Australia makes the following submission in support of all three components of motion CO5/20-446 put forward by Councillors Ola Hamed and George Campbell, pertaining to the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)'s Nobody Left Behind Campaign.

People seeking asylum are in need

According to Cumberland Council's 2018 report into homelessness, there were 2,763 people seeking asylum on Bridging Visa Es (BVEs), living within the LGA. Recent figures show that this number has not changed significantly. There is now also a much larger population of people seeking asylum on Bridging Visa As (BVAs) in NSW, some of whom are likely reside in Cumberland LGA.

JRS Australia works with approximately 3,700 people seeking asylum and migrants in vulnerable situations in Western Sydney (on 2019 figures), including a significant proportion who live in Cumberland LGA.

Broadly speaking, we are witnessing the following trends in impact:

People are losing permanent and casual employment without access to any form of Federal Government safety net (JobKeeper, JobSeeker, or SRSS) or State government relief packages and cannot return home because their protection claims are still being assessed.

Predominantly casual employees are being stood down, or having shifts reduced to a point where they cannot pay rent, or for other basic expenses.

Clients are re-presenting to JRS after 5 years of independent living in the community.

A greater number of people are sleeping in overcrowded dwellings or sleeping rough in particular geographical areas of Western Sydney. There are significant, accompanying risks of cluster outbreaks.

These increases come despite a so-called moratorium on evictions. Some landlords are continuing to demand rent, and many people fear of accruing arrears for repayment at a later date. Many are already in significant debt due to loans taken to pay migration agents, or money owed to brokers in countries of origin. People without access to Medicare/PBS are missing out on diagnosis, treatment of other ailments, and cannot afford pharmaceuticals. There are accompanying fears of presenting at hospitals for fear of having to pay up front or for fear of re-detention if reported to DHA.

Through JRS Australia's 'Finding Safety' service, there is anecdotal evidence of an increase in calls from women who feel at greater risk of being harmed in their homes (DV/FV). This is exacerbated by situations in which perpetrators are with the victim 24/7, and experiencing increased stressed and anxiety themselves. Access to DV refuges for women on temporary visas is harder than ever. Case work/counselling phone conversations involving the words 'hopelessness' or explicit expressions of suicidality have grown significantly. Charities are trying to cope, but systemic reform is required

Demand for JRS Australia's food, emergency financial relief, and casework services have grown significantly in the last few weeks. Some of the key statistics are as follows:

Approximately 35% of people employed through our program in the last two years – 74 people - have lost jobs in the last 4 – 6 weeks. The number of phone calls from people who are food insecure (generally in need of a food bank parcel in the same week), who cannot make a rental payment, are in rental arrears, or need psycho-social support has increased by 120%.

160 people were on our phone wait-list as of last Friday.

90% of phone conversations include sentiments expressing 'hopelessness' or 'suicidality.'

Demand for food services has doubled in the last month. Now delivering to approximately 670 people per week. Total numbers are growing each week.

Roughly 45% of the households receiving food parcels from JRS are living in the Cumberland LGA.

Our monthly ER financial budget tripled in March 2020, and ran out in two weeks.

Charities such as JRS Australia will continue to support people on the frontlines, but ultimately it is federal government policy that will ensure that people seeking asylum are health, safe, and independent in this time.

The asks of the Nobody Left Behind campaign, if implemented, would ensure that people seeking asylum around the country have some form of financial support if they cannot find work, can access adequate and safe medical care where required, and have the foundation of legal status (noting that Bridging Visas are often not recognised or valued by employers and landlords) to sign leases, and apply for official employment.

Case studies

Niraj* came to Australia in 2019 and sought protection. In January 2020, Niraj found employment at a restaurant in regional NSW. He relocated to the regional area about an hour away from Sydney and found a place to live there. On 25 March 2020, he was told that the restaurant was closing down indefinitely and that he would no longer be required to work.

Niraj has approximately \$40 in savings, and his fortnightly rent of approximately \$350 was due last week.

JRS Australia does not have money in its emergency relief (ER) budget to support Niraj with ongoing rental payments, given that our priority is families with young children. Niraj is relying on his landlord to delay rental payments by a week so that he can borrow the required money, and collect a bit of money as an Uber Eats delivery bicyclist.

Case study 2:

Mazhar, Nadira, and Khubra came to Australia late last year, and then applied for protection. They contacted JRS Australia soon after in severe financial hardship. They were four weeks behind on rent and on the cusp of being homeless. After an assessment, JRS Australia began supporting the family to pay their rental arrears, but they were nonetheless evicted. Mazhar found casual work in a factory earlier this year and the family informed JRS Australia that they no longer needed any support.

The family also managed to sign a short-term lease on a rental property in Western Sydney. In mid March, Mazhar lost his job and the family contacted JRS Australia again for support. All three family members were experiencing suicidal ideations and a number of mental health crisis calls were made, as well as referrals for longer-term community mental health support. The family still do not have any source of income and are getting by on food bank handouts, emergency relief payments, and odd bits of money from neighbours.

The family has an eviction notice for early April 2020 that has not yet been withdrawn. Because the parents have work rights, and the father cannot produce sufficient evidence of his inability to work, they are ineligible for the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS).

Case study 3:

Rahmatullah came to Australia and sought protection in 2012. He spent three years and was released into the Australian community in 2015. Rahmathullah suffers from complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), bipolar disorder, kidney disease, and osteoarthritis.

Rahmatullah's application for protection has been rejected at the primary stage, and at the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA). Rahmatullah did not lodge an application for judicial review because he was hospitalized for three months at the time and unaware of his right to lodge. Rahmatullah lodged an application for Ministerial Intervention into his case in late 2019, and is awaiting an answer. Rahmatullah is homeless.

He does not have any form of bridging visa, nor does he have Medicare. He has stopped seeing a GP because he cannot afford the fees, and does not take all of his pre-existing medication because he does not have prescriptions, nor access to the PBS in order to be able to afford all of his medicines.

Rahmatullah avoids going to the hospital because he is afraid that Australian Border Force may be made aware of his presence at a health facility without a valid visa and re-detain him.

Case study 4:

JRS Australia has been working with a young family of five for a number of years. Nazia*, the mother has experienced serious domestic violence in the past. On the occasions she has attempted to leave, she hasn't been able to find a spot in a refuge or has reneged, worried about the consequences for her immigration status. Nazia's* protection visa application is tied to that of her husband, who is also the perpetrator.

JRS Australia has been told on multiple occasions that the family is not eligible for SRSS support because of their 'finally determined' status (that is, their application for protection has been twice rejected by the Department and the AAT).

Nazia's husband has lost his job due to COVID-19, and the family is under immense financial pressure to meet their rental obligations and to buy necessities such as nappies. JRS Australia is concerned that Nazia and her children are at greater risk of DV because her husband is now home all of the time, and is increasingly anxious.

Written Submissions on General Items

Sharlyn Teo

My question relates to Long Day Care -

- a) In light of the fact that a recruitment chill was put in place by council in July 2019, and that has impacted upon the replacement of staff that have left or gone on leave. How many positions are currently vacant where the staffing ratios are being covered by casuals?
- b) Has council ever discussed or is in discussions about the privatisation or outsourcing of the Long Day Care Centres.

Michael McGowan

Can you please explain why your financial report for FY2019 shows a marked difference (\$88,000 loss) to the FY20 projected \$7million loss - and how this \$7million figure has been calculated.

- in an email from Richard Sheridan (as attached) he says "Currently we are not achieving full cost recover as the net loss is \$7m per annum"
- This \$7mil loss looks to be for the entire Childrens services program, and long day care is a small part of this program and accounts for a small portion of the loss.
- Is long day care being made to wear some of the losses of the other Children's services program. Can you break down the loss?
- In your report C02/20-366 Attachment 2 Service Unit Reports. from your meeting on 19 February - you have an expense line called "internal costs" for the amount of \$2.899 million - what do these charges relate to? This charge looks not included in the 2019FY financial statement for long day care. Can you please explain why this cost is now being allocated against other departments?
- Regarding report C02/20-366 Attachment 2 Service Unit Reports. Why does the section for "Finance & Governance" have a significant negative expense for internal charges, whilst every other department have significant costs? Is this an internal charge transfer for Council services? If so, what basis has been used to identify how these costs are calculated, and why is this not shown as income?

Margaret Romeo

Careforkids.com.au was used as a comparison for childcare in a 2019 Cumberland Council meeting - Item No: C11/19-267 – and I quote:

"The 'Care for Kids' website reports that the average cost of Long Day Care in Cumberland is approximately \$101 per child per day before subsidies (See: <https://www.careforkids.com.au/home/childcarecosts>). Therefore, Council is currently charging below the industry average for the Cumberland Local Government Area."

This was used to establish that Cumberland Council were undercharging for their Childcare services, and increased fees in January 2020.

I visited this website www.careforkids.com.au on 19 May 2020 and the result reflected that you should be expecting to pay \$101.75 per day for a child.
How does the Director of Community Development justify the increase of the cost of long day care to the point where the largest increase will make the 0-3 room in Pemulwuy Children's centre 15.2% more expensive than the average cost?