Resolution of Council

15 May 2023

Item 11.6

Strengthening Commitments to Address Systemic and Institutional Racism Across the Workplace

Moved by Councillor Davis, seconded by Councillor Kok –

It is resolved:

(A) Council note:

(i) the City of Sydney recognises that workplaces that are diverse and inclusive perform better and are more innovative. Inclusive workplaces allow employees of diverse backgrounds to bring their best selves to work every day, enhancing collaboration, engagement and workplace wellbeing, and has been working to increase the diversity of the workforce;

(ii) at 31 March 2023, 405 City of Sydney employees identified as culturally or linguistically diverse, representing 22.7 per cent of the workforce, and 50 City of Sydney employees identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, representing 2.8 per cent of the workforce;

(iii) the City of Sydney has committed to addressing racism in the workplace and the broader community through:

(a) “A City for All’ Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan 2018-2028 that commits the City to “lead by example as an employer committed to social justice and inclusion by implementing workplace diversity and inclusion policies and practices”;

(b) the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2023 which commits the City “to positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies”, including by continuously improving human resource policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel and providing ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism and discrimination;

(c) the Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2026 which commits to “addressing factors contributing to psychological safety for diverse employees and actioning mitigation strategies to address any systemic barriers” to inclusion;

(d) anti-racism and allyship training workshop and cultural intelligence workshops that explore unconscious bias for the community as part of the Council endorsed ‘Racism. It Stops With Me’ campaign; and

(e) installing four ‘Racism Not Welcome’ street signs in high profile locations, with high vehicular and pedestrian traffic;

(iv) racism is not always conscious, explicit, or readily visible. Sometimes even the most well-intentioned people can perpetuate racist behaviour because they are unaware of the values, structures and systems that create biases in their decision making;

(v) systemic racism is a result of entrenched practices and beliefs that are deeply embedded in an institutions system, laws, written or unwritten policies that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment;

(vi) the Diversity Council of Australia’s Racism at Work Report (2022) states that “to address racism, we need first to understand what it is: but this can be challenging for people who do not experience racism and because how racism is expressed and experienced changes over time and from place to place”; and

(vii) the Diversity Council of Australia’s Racism at Work Report calls for organisations actively adopt a racially conscious “anti-racism” stance that recognises our default world view is white and put lived experience at the centre of how organisations address racism;

(B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate ways to strengthen the City of Sydney’s commitment to addressing racism, including by:

(i) working with the Multicultural Advisory Panel, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and relevant employee networks:

(a) when reviewing City of Sydney workplace strategies, policies and procedures that address racism and/or that are designed to create a more equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace; and

(f) developing an over-arching anti-racism framework or charter that addresses structural, interpersonal (everyday bias), intersectionality and institutional racism and discrimination in the workplace and across our city;

(ii) making anti-racism training mandatory for City of Sydney employees, the Lord Mayor and Councillors, and providing other ongoing learning and development opportunities with an anti-racism focus;

(iii) exploring opportunities to embed anti-racism in future major service contracts with third-party employers, and major contractors; and

(iv) report back to Council on outcomes of investigations and progress on addressing racism.

Carried unanimously.

X086660