



Extraordinary Meeting

Date of meeting: 17 January 2023
Location: Council Chambers
Time: 6:30 p.m.

BUSINESS PAPER

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Table of Contents

Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM	SUBJECT	PAGE
	PROCEDURAL MATTERS	3
	SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion	7
Item: 001	NM - Warning Signs and Swimming Safety in Macquarie Park - (138882)	7

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Table of Contents

Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Procedural Matters

Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Welcome

The Mayor, Councillor Sarah McMahon will acknowledge the Indigenous Heritage.

The General Manager will address the Council meeting, mentioning:

- Emergency Procedures
- Recording of the Council Meeting
- Statement regarding people addressing the Meeting
- Mobile phones

Attendance

Attending Councillors and Council staff members will be noted for the purposes of the Minutes.

Statement of Ethical Obligations

On 11 January 2022 in accordance with Section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993, Councillors took an oath or made an affirmation of office to undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the Hawkesbury City Council Local Government Area and the Hawkesbury City Council and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in Councillors under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgment.

Council's Code of Conduct requires Councillors to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Apologies and Leave of Absence or Attendance by Audio-Visual Link

The Mayor will ask for any Apologies or Leave of Absence Requests to be noted.

Declaration of Interest

The Mayor will ask for any Declaration of Interests from the attending Councillors. These will then be addressed at the relevant item.

Acknowledgement of Official Visitors to the Council

The Mayor will acknowledge and welcome official visitors to the Council and make any relevant presentations as required.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Procedural Matters

Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

Ordinary

Section **5**

Notices of motion

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion

Item: 001 **NM - Warning Signs and Swimming Safety in Macquarie Park - (138882)**

Submitted by: Councillor Wheeler

NOTICE OF MOTION:

That Council:

1. As a matter of urgency, erects clear and concise warning signs in Macquarie Park, including on the sand bank on the river, at the Park entrance, on Windsor Bridge and in the area directly opposite Macquarie Park on The Terrace. Signs should plainly state that it is dangerous to swim at the site and include languages other than English. Additional warnings about strong currents, shifting sands, debris, pollution and lack of supervision should be included but must not detract from the main message that swimming at this site is extremely dangerous.
2. Commences a public education campaign, in conjunction with neighbouring Councils including The Hills and Blacktown City, and other relevant agencies, to increase awareness of the dangers of swimming in rivers, with a focus on the dangers at Macquarie Park. Local Darug leaders should be contacted so their stories can be included.
3. Contacts other relevant agencies, including Sydney Water and Tourism NSW, and mapping sites like Google Maps, informing them of the dangers at this site and asking them not to promote it as a swimming spot or make reference to "Windsor Beach".
4. Ensures that Council does not use the term "Windsor Beach" in any of its documents or commentary.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This will incur financial costs for signage and education.

NOTE BY MANAGEMENT

The dangers of swimming in the Hawkesbury River at Macquarie Park have previously been recognised by Council.

In 2018, Council engaged Royal Life Saving NSW to undertake a safety assessment of the location, with the outcome being a positive assessment of the remote supervision signage in place. This signage was deemed best-practice at that time and has been maintained on an ongoing basis as the signs have been defaced, damaged or impacted upon by flooding, since February 2020.

In October 2021, Council again partnered with Royal Life Saving NSW on the installation of two public life saving device stations (lifebuoy rings) at Macquarie Park. To the extent of the knowledge of Council officers, these rings have not been deployed in an emergency situation or for the aid of a swimmer in trouble.

Following the most recent drowning incidents, staff have commenced discussions with both Royal Life Saving NSW and the Hawkesbury Police Area Command (HPAC) on an approach to reviewing the location, developing our understanding of the contributing factors to these incidents, and identifying any practicable measures to mitigate the risk to human life.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

In response to these early discussions, Council has now engaged Royal Lifesaving NSW for the purpose of undertaking a Safety Assessment. The date of this Assessment is yet to be determined and will be on the basis of the Royal Life Saving's availability. HPAC representation will be incorporated as part of this Assessment.

Immediate measures, in response to the drowning incidents, undertaken in December 2022 and January 2023 have been:

- An audit of signage, resulting in an additional five sign faces being erected in various locations at Macquarie Park outlining the dangers and risks of swimming, predominantly on existing poles to achieve a uniformity of signs;
- Social media post on the dangers of swimming in inland rivers and sharing Royal Life Saving NSW social media content;
- Development and imminent installation of signage in languages other than English which are common to surrounding local government areas and visitors to the Hawkesbury, warning of the dangers of swimming at Macquarie Park.

With these measures in place, there will be 15 individual signs across 8 locations in Macquarie Park as shown in Attachment 1 to this report. Additional signage, consistent with that already in place, can be installed at Howe Park on The Terrace and Council will consult with the owner of the Windsor Bridge, Transport for NSW, on the installation of warning signage on that structure.

Research undertaken by Royal Lifesaving Australia and published in their *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2022* identified rivers and creeks to be the leading location for drownings in 2021-2022. Alarming, that same report identifies a considerable increase in the number of drowning fatalities for that year compared with both the previous year (15% increase) and the 10-year average (24% increase).

A consistent and whole-of-community approach is necessary to address this national problem and to this end, it is strongly recommended that any further actions are developed in consultation with Royal Life Saving NSW, to ensure that these actions are informed by the most recent research into human behaviour, are consistent with broader campaigns relating to public education and importantly do not serve to dilute, confuse or contradict messaging from other trusted sources such as the NSW Government or the Royal Life Saving Society.

With respect to naming conventions, the beach at Macquarie Park is extensively referred to and known as "Windsor Beach" within both the local community and the broader Greater Sydney community. It remains to be seen whether there would be any negative unintended or counterproductive consequences arising from a disassociation between the community's use of "Windsor Beach", any public messaging or reference to the dangers of swimming at "Macquarie Park".

It is recommended that Council seeks advice, as part of the Safety Assessment to be undertaken by Royal Life Saving NSW, on how best to penetrate the community's collective psyche, including the importance of name recognition, in any media or public information campaign and to then ensure consistency between this and Council's documents including those for the purpose of planning, media and the visitor economy.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT - 1 Signage locations in Macquarie Park.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

AT - 1 Signage locations in Macquarie Park



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 - Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 17 January 2023

Red Signage Locations - Signs Enlarged





MACQUARIE PARK

**Use of this facility may be hazardous
Please observe these signs for your safety**

In accordance with Section 632 of the LGA following activities are prohibited.



NO DIVING INTO WATER



NO JUMPING INTO WATER



NO SWIMMING IN FLOODS OR HEAVY RAIN



SUBMERGED OBSTACLES



NO SWIMMING IN FLOODS OR HEAVY RAIN



STRONG CURRENTS



SHALLOW WATER



SUDDEN DROP



BOATING AREA



DEEP WATER



NO LIFESAVING SERVICE



FALLING BRANCHES



Keep children under active supervision at all times in or around water

**In case of Emergency call
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By Order of the General Manager

oooO END OF NOTICE OF MOTION Oooo



Extraordinary meeting

End of Business Paper

This business paper has been produced electronically to reduce costs, improve efficiency and reduce the use of paper. Internal control systems ensure it is an accurate reproduction of Council's official copy of the business paper.