

9.4.3 LATE ITEM: Adoption of Marriage Equality Proclamation

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| Ward: | Both | Date: | 13 November 2014 |
| Precinct: | All | File Ref: | SC1255 |
| Attachments: | 001 – Byron Shire Council Letter 002 – Byron Shire Council - Marriage Equality Proclamation 003 – City of Vincent Council – Draft Marriage Equality Proclamation | | |
| Tabled Items: | Nil | | |
| Reporting Officer: | J Anthony, Acting Director Community Services | | |
| Responsible Officer: | J Anthony, Acting Director Community Services | | |

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That Council APPROVES:

1. To adopt the Marriage Equality Proclamation; and
2. To join the Mayors for Marriage Equality Group.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider adopting a Marriage Equality Proclamation, at the request of the Byron Shire Council, and joining the Mayors for Marriage Equality Group.

BACKGROUND:

Council at its meeting held on 6 November 2012 resolved to adopt and carry out Community Consultation regarding draft Policy No 4.1.34, for the purpose of creating and maintaining the City of Vincent Relationship Declaration Register.

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 18 December 2012, Council resolved as follows:

“That the Council;

1. *CONSIDERS the twenty five (25) submissions received concerning the Draft Policy No.1.34 – Relationship Declaration Register, as detailed in the report; and*
2. *APPROVES BY AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY to adopt the amended Policy No. 4.1.34 – Relationship Declaration Register (RDR), as shown in Appendix 9.5.2.”*

On 8 September 2014 the Byron Shire Council wrote to the City (Attachment 001) requesting support for Marriage Equality and inviting the City of Vincent Council to adopt a Marriage Equality Proclamation similar to their own (Attachment 002) and to join the Mayors for Marriage Equality Group.

DETAILS:

In March 2014, Byron Shire Council resolved (13-125) to support marriage equality by issuing a Certificate of Marriage to same-sex couples who choose to marry in the Shire.

As a first step, Byron Shire Council has written to Federal Senators and Parliamentary party leaders urging them to support the passage of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2013.

Byron Shire Council has developed, using community consultation, a *Marriage Equality Proclamation* (Attachment 002) and has invited the City to show its support by adopting a similar proclamation. The Shire will be collecting Marriage Equality Proclamations from Local Governments across Australia, with the intent to present these to the Prime Minister to show local government support for marriage equality.

Byron Shire Council has created a *Mayors for Marriage Equality* group and written to all Local Government Mayors in Australia, inviting them to join the group and input into ways to formalise and develop this collaboration.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

It is Council's prerogative to decide whether to adopt a Marriage Equality Proclamation and, if so, whether to invite community consultation on the proposal before doing so.

LEGAL/POLICY:

A Marriage Equality Proclamation would build on Council's existing Policy No. 4.1.34 – Relationship Declaration Register.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This matter is in keeping with The City's *Strategic Plan 2013-2023* which states:

“Community Development and Wellbeing

3.1.1 Celebrate, acknowledge and promote the City's cultural and social diversity.

Leadership, Governance and Management:

4.1.2 Manage the Organisation in a responsible, efficient and accountable manner.

4.1.5 Focus on stakeholder needs, values, engagement and involvement”.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Nil

COMMENTS:

The City's Relationship Declaration Register was the first of its type in Western Australia, providing a service to persons seeking to make such a declaration. Since its inception in December 2012, over 100 couples have made declarations under this Register.

It is appropriate for the City to support marriage equality by formulating its own Marriage Equality Proclamation and by further participating in the Mayor's for Marriage Equality group. These actions would both be consistent with and would build on the principles and values enshrined in Council's Policy regarding the Relationship Declaration Register.

Administration has prepared a Marriage Equality Proclamation for Council's consideration, based on the Byron Shire Council's own proclamation but substituting reference to that Shire with reference to the City of Vincent Council (refer Attachment 003).
