



## **MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **1. Opening**

The Public Forum commenced at 5.33pm.

### **2. Presentations relating to listed Items on the Council Agenda**

The following presenters were heard:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Item no</b>	<b>Item description</b>	<b>For/Against</b>
1	Tracey Howard	9.4	Exhibition of Memorial Garden Preliminary Concept Design	Against
2	Sue Jarvis	9.5	WB Freebody Sculpture	For

### **3. Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted.

### **4. 'Questions on Notice' from the Public**

A responses to the following 'Question on Notice' received up to Wednesday 20 September 2023 were provided and tabled at the meeting (see attached for responses):

	<b>Received from</b>	<b>In relation to:</b>
1	Sandy Funston	QPRC's resolution re Voice to Parliament item and action for the upcoming National Referendum

### **5. Presentations by Invitation from the General Manager**

There were no presentations.

### **6. Closure**

As there were no further matters, the Public Forum closed at 5.42pm.



## ATTACHMENT TO MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 27 September 2023

### **‘Questions on Notice’ from the Public**

Responses to the following ‘Questions on Notice’ received up to *Wednesday 20 September 2023* were provided and tabled at the meeting.

### **Questions submitted by: Sandy Funston**

- 1. Is it legal for the QPRC to advertise and promote its support to the proposed change to the constitution supporting a 'yes' vote, in the upcoming national referendum and encourage members of the community to seek more information by providing Australian Government resources available. Could you please provide evidence that this is in fact legal as it is my understanding it is not.**

The first part of the resolution of Council at its meeting of 13 September 2023 stated Council's support for the proposed change to the Constitution supporting a 'yes' vote in the upcoming referendum.

The resolution does not imply that individuals are bound to do the same.

Further, there was no funding allocated to lobby or campaign for this position. Contrary to misinformation in social media and on local radio, Council has not made any financial contribution to the 'yes' campaign.

The second part of the resolution was that Council encourage members of the community to seek more information by providing Australian Government resources, e.g. on the QPRC website, on social media, making printed material available in Council venues and, time permitting, provide information in the QPRC newsletter.

Reminding the community of election dates and venues is standard practice and something Council does for all local, state and federal government elections.

Staff commented on the legality of the Notice of Motion as noted in the Business Paper:

*In regard to this particular Notice of Motion, the Office of Local Government (OLG) has provided the following advice:*

*‘Whilst there are political parties declaring their support or opposition, this does not fall within the scope of clause 8.17 of the Council's Code of Conduct which relates to supporting the election campaigns of individuals for elected office.*

*The Voice to Parliament in this case is about Council participating in a campaign on an issue of interest to the local community that is the subject of a constitutional referendum.*

*One of the functions conferred on the governing bodies of Councils under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1993 is to ‘provide effective civic leadership to the local community’.*

*This includes expressing views on behalf of Council on matters of community interest and campaigning on them.*

*While there may be some in the community who may not share Council's view on the referendum question should it adopt the motion, it will be open to them and others to pass judgement on the Council's decision at the next Council election.'*

We are raising community awareness about the referendum via a number of existing communication channels at no additional expense to the Council or the ratepayer. This includes the QPRC Library which already hosts a range of resources in hard copy and online at: <https://library.qprc.nsw.gov.au/collections/the-voice-resources/the-voice-resources>

The October edition of the QPRC newsletter will feature a small article with the following statement.

### **The Voice Referendum**

All Australian citizens aged 18 and over must vote in the referendum on Saturday 14 October.

Polling will be open between 8am and 6pm, and early voting is also available if you can't make it on the day.

Your vote will help make an important decision for Australia. Make sure to consider the source of what you see, hear, or read.

For information about what the Voice will mean, go to: [voice.gov.au](https://voice.gov.au)

Learn about the referendum at: [aec.gov.au](https://aec.gov.au)

Council is not encouraging how an individual will vote. The intention is simply to remind the community of the referendum date, voting venues and links to Australian Government resources to assist the community being better informed.