

1 **STEPANAKERT FRIENDSHIP CITY - Councillor Sarkis Yedelian OAM**

File Number: CLM/19/1/1/6 - BP19/825

BACKGROUND:

WHEREAS, the City of Ryde is proud that on 22 May 2018, it unanimously adopted a Resolution recognising the 30th anniversary of the Artsakh liberation movement, and honoured the expression of the fundamental human rights of the native Armenian population of the Republic of Artsakh to exercise self-determination and democracy in the face of tyranny;

WHEREAS, the Republic of Artsakh declared its independence through a referendum held on 10 December 1991, which was overwhelmingly approved by the people, with Stepanakert chosen as their Capital;

WHEREAS, Stepanakert – being the largest city in the Republic of Artsakh – is the most similar city to Ryde on population, economic and political grounds, and hosts a large number of Ryde Armenians as tourists each year, which is all in accordance with the requirements of Ryde City's Protocol For International And Australian Friendship Agreements;

WHEREAS, the Armenian-Australian community of Ryde, through the Armenian National Committee of Australia, has initiated this process in accordance with the Protocol For International And Australian Friendship Agreements, by expressing a sincere interest in the City of Ryde establishing a Friendship City Relationship between a city in Artsakh and Ryde, in light of the July-August 2019 Australia visit of Republic of Artsakh's Foreign Minister; and

WHEREAS, the sizeable Ryde Armenian community – together with its cultural, sporting, scouting, educational, youth and welfare organisations – ensures this Friendship City Relationship will have strong and meaningful historical, cultural, economic, industrial or educational links between the two cities, pursuant to the requirements of the Protocol For International And Australian Friendship Agreements.

MOTION:

- (a) That, The City of Ryde establish a "Ryde – Stepanakert Friendship City Committee" to establish greater friendship and understanding between the people of the City of Ryde and Artsakh's Capital, through the medium of direct personal contact that supports and promotes each region's social, cultural and economic objectives, in line with the Protocol For International And Australian Friendship Agreements.
- (b) That, Council hereby appoints Mayor Jerome Laxale and Councillor Sarkis Yedelian as Co-Chairs of the Ryde – Stepanakert Friendship City Committee, and that they be authorised to appoint additional members of the Committee;
- (c) That the Committee explore with the upcoming Artsakh Republic Delegation visit to Sydney, headed by the country's Foreign Minister, The Honourable Masis Maylian, opportunities and avenues to building closer social, cultural and economic ties between the Cities of Ryde and Stepanakert.

Council, dated 17 July 2019, submitted on 23 July 2019.