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CITY NEWS

City Council to live-stream meetings

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More Moore: from 16 Feb City of Sydney will live-stream their Council meetings. Photo: Hpeterswald/Wikimedia

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By MAX TILLMAN

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“The Committee meetings will be streamed on 10 February, followed by Council meetings the week after,” a spokesperson for The City of Sydney Council said. “The meetings will be streamed live with archived copies available on the website afterward.”

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Prescribed in December of 2018, the NSW Government’s [Model Code of Meeting Practise](#) required all local councils to begin live-streaming meetings “of which all members are councillors from December 2019.”

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According to a spokesperson for The City of Sydney, the council’s last meeting of 2019 fell before the State Governments deadline, meaning constituents would have to wait until February of this year for a live-feed of council business.

“Our final council meeting in 2019 was held on 9 December, and our equipment installed later that week so we are yet to stream a meeting. It was installed prior to the State Government’s deadline of 14 December 2019 and will be used for the first meetings of 2020.”

A Town Hall Divided

While many councils across the state had already begun broadcasting their assemblies long before the State Government’s 14 Dec deadline – including neighbouring Inner West Council that has been live-streaming meetings since 2016 – the City of Sydney has remained a house divided.

Independent Councillor Angela Vithoulkas has long advocated for the introduction of live-streaming, yet her appeals were consistently met with a simple question by opposing councillors – why bother?

“That’s not good enough, because even if one person only tuned into the live streaming, many more will have access to the council meeting after the live date,” Cr Vithoulkas said. “It is becoming more and more important for people to at least have one level of government in which there is full transparency as to what is going on.”

Lights, Camera, Faction

While the State Government’s Model Code of Practise has made live-streaming mandatory, the issue of full transparency to the public was not a new subject by any means.

Best Of Sydney 2019

“I have been fighting to introduce the live streaming of Council meetings since I was elected to The City of Sydney Council in 2016,” Cr Chung said. “The Clover Moore Party has rejected the idea time and time again.”

The Lord Mayor’s Independent Team of Robert Kok, Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully, Jess Miller, and Philip Thalys make up half of the current City of Sydney’s councillors.

Councillor Vithoukias particularly highlights the power of this formidable voting bloc when suppressing previous motions for live-streaming council assemblies. “It has been a subject of the last two council term, and it was pushed back in both terms by both sets of the Clover Moore independent team,” Cr Vithoukias said. “It’s sad that it had to come down to enforcement, because we’re very late to the party.”

And while official statements from The City of Sydney make clear streaming equipment was installed in early December last year, Councillor Vithoukias believes the gadgetry is only just arriving. “As I understand it, the infrastructure is being installed right now as we speak.”

For all of City Hub’s previous coverage on council live streaming:

<http://cityhubsydney.com.au/?s=live+streaming>

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