

Monday 15 April 2024

Ryde Mayor vows to continue TG Millner fight

City of Ryde Mayor Cllr Trenton Brown has vowed that Council will continue its fight to keep the TG Millner Fields in Marsfield as public open space, despite the State Government's refusal to allow the compulsory acquisition of the 6.2ha ground and its surrounds.

Cllr Brown said he was "shocked and devastated" by the State Government decision on the site, which has been the subject of a passionate community campaign to prevent a proposed housing development on the famous sporting fields from going ahead.

"I have asked for the Premier to intervene in this matter and take the issue to the NSW Cabinet for a decision to protect TG Millner Fields," Cllr Brown said.

"I will continue to seek the preservation of this site as open space to work with the State MP, Jordan Lane and the Federal MP, Jerome Laxale, to keep this site as open space for future generations."

In a newspaper report published on Friday 12 April, NSW Local Government Minister Ron Hoenig said he had refused permission for the compulsory acquisition of the land from North Ryde RSL because of concerns about Council's ability to pay for it.

But Cllr Brown challenged the State Government over this claim.

"The City of Ryde has provisioned \$15 million for the purchase of this site," he said. "If the Minister thinks that this is insufficient funding then he should determine its worth and secure the difference in funding from the State Government.

"If this Government is focussed on increasing the amount of green space in a growing community, then it needs to step-up and step-in to situations like this that place at risk valuable open space being consumed by property developers."

The TG Millner Fields were donated by the Millner family to the Eastwood Rugby Club in the 1960s.

TG Millner remains a vitally important open green space venue for sports and recreation year-round in the City of Ryde and no such facilities exist elsewhere in the local government area.

The TG Millner land was sold by Eastwood Rugby Club to North Ryde RSL in 2017. The owner has submitted a planning proposal to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment seeking to rezone the land to enable them to develop it for 132 town house dwellings.

At the November 2023 Council Meeting, City of Ryde resolved to acquire the TG Millner Fields to give the residents of Ryde the valued open space they require for existing and future resident needs.

As part of the resolution, Council recognised the significant lack of open space that has been provisioned in the State Government's proposed rezoning plans for local areas such as the Macquarie Park Innovation District and objected to the removal of existing long term open space, such as TG Millner, when there is little or no provision made for open space in those newly proposed rezonings.

Council further advised the Minister for Planning of a funding allocation by City of Ryde of \$15 million to the purchase of TG Millner to be sourced from the Property Acquisition Reserve account.

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