

Friday 26 July 2024

## **New fight to save TG Millner from developers' bulldozers**

The City of Ryde has stepped up its fight to maintain TG Millner Fields as essential open space after the site's current owners resubmitted plans for a housing development deemed to have no strategic merit when initially lodged in 2022.

Council is seeking collaboration from the NSW Government in the compulsory acquisition of this valuable 6.2ha of green playing fields in Marsfield as new government housing targets will dramatically increase the population and density of nearby Macquarie Park and neighbouring suburbs, increasing demand beyond breaking point on our existing sports fields.

In April 2024, The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government, refused to provide consent for the City of Ryde to issue a Proposed Acquisition Notice (PAN) for TG Millner, despite a previous promise by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to collaborate with Council and assist with the acquisition of this vital open space.

Based on that collaborative work with the State Government, Council set aside \$15 million to help fund the compulsory acquisition.

At its Ordinary Meeting on Tuesday 23 July 2024, Council resolved that CEO Wayne Rylands write to Minister Hoenig, asking him to reconsider the decision to deny issuing City of Ryde with the PAN.

It also noted that the Mayor, Cllr Trenton Brown, has already written to the NSW Premier, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Local Government, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces encouraging them to provide the funding promised by the DPHI.

Cllr Brown said the provision of open space in the City of Ryde was a critical issue that needed to be urgently addressed by the State Government if it was to strike the right balance between its ambitious housing plans and the crucial local infrastructure required to support a booming population.

Analysis conducted by the City of Ryde in 2021 found that an additional 13 sporting fields were required to cater for an anticipated population growth to over 175,000 by 2036. Further demand for open space caused by the extra population to be delivered by the State Government's Macquarie Park Innovation District (MPID) Stage 1 and Stage 2 rezoning proposals mean that an extra six new competition sporting fields will now be required on top of that, and it will be needed in Macquarie Park and its surrounds.

"The MPID Rezoning Strategies and Transport Oriented Development (TOD) plan proposed by the State Government will place significantly greater pressure on the existing open space in the City of Ryde," Cllr Brown said. "TG Millner Fields has regional significance in supporting the open space needs of an increased population across the Ryde LGA."

“We are not a NIMBY council, and we will continue to exceed our housing targets. But it’s vital that the right balance be struck between extra housing and the provision of employment opportunities, infrastructure and – most importantly – open space.”

Clr Brown said there were only minor differences between the new Marsfield Common planning proposal submitted by TG Millner’s owners, North Ryde RSL, and the application that was refused two years ago.

In its unanimous decision handed down in December 2022, the Sydney North Planning Panel resolved that the proposal to construct 132 low rise terrace homes ‘failed to adequately demonstrate Strategic Merit’ and that TG Millner ‘has the potential to contribute to the amount of open space needed to service the future population of Ryde LGA’.

“This planning proposal does nothing to add to the community’s current need for open space, let alone the future needs of a population that will continue to grow over the next 15 years if the City of Ryde meets its housing target of 11,460 constructed dwellings,” Clr Brown said.

“City of Ryde is only interested in providing essential space for the health and well-being of its fast-growing community, not in generating a quick profit through an ill-considered housing development.”

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