

Wednesday 18 September 2024

TG Millner acquisition vital for open space in Ryde

The City of Ryde continues its fight to maintain TG Millner Fields as essential open space, despite the site's current owners resubmitting plans for a housing development determined by the Ryde Local Planning Panel meeting (LPP), administered by the Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (DPHI) to have a lack of strategic merit when initially lodged in 2022.

The City of Ryde recognises the importance of housing in the current environment, but strongly believes that housing can be provided throughout the Local Government Area (LGA) by *striking the right balance* between housing, infrastructure, and employment.

As the City of Ryde continues to evolve, the demand for open space, recreational areas, and essential community infrastructure becomes increasingly critical. The proposed rezonings by the DPHI for the Macquarie Park Innovation Precinct Stage 1 and Stage 2 highlight a significant increase in residential density and the potential lack of adequate green spaces for the growing population. Council acknowledges these concerns and is taking proactive steps to secure land that could be transformed into much-needed open space for recreation and leisure.

There are very few opportunities remaining throughout the City of Ryde where quality and well-located open space to the scale required for active recreation can be set aside. Council has long recognised the need for more open space and recreational facilities, particularly considering the projected residential growth in Macquarie Park, expected to exceed an additional 30,000 people within the next 15 years. The TG Millner site is currently zoned for private recreation and is well located in proximity to the Macquarie Park area. The site is of a size and scale that allows for its ongoing use for active recreation.

According to Council's 2021 Open Space Future Provision Strategy an additional 13 sporting fields were required to cater for an anticipated population growth to over 175,000 in 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 means that an extra 6 new competition sporting fields will now be required in addition to the 13 fields previously identified.

In April 2024, The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government, declined the City of Ryde's Proposed Acquisition Notice (PAN) for TG Millner, despite a previous promise by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to provide the necessary funding towards essential open space, such as TG Millner. Council has written to Minister Hoenig, asking him to reconsider the decision to deny issuing City of Ryde with the PAN, and to provide details of the estimated funding required for the City of Ryde to acquire this essential open space required by the community.

Council has currently budgeted for and put forward an offer of \$15 million to help fund the compulsory acquisition.

Council has sought assistance from the Commonwealth and NSW Government for the compulsory acquisition of this valuable 6.2ha of regional playing fields in Marsfield, as new government housing targets threaten to dramatically increase the population and density of nearby Macquarie Park and neighbouring suburbs.

The Mayor, Clr Trenton Brown has written to the Federal Member of Bennelong, Jerome Laxale MP on multiple occasions seeking a commitment to preserve TG Millner as essential open space to honour his past commitments when he was the Mayor of Ryde and help with funding the purchase of this important site.

In addition, Clr Brown has written to the Premier for New South Wales, as well as the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Local Government, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to encourage them to provide the funding as promised by the DPHI as part of the MPID rezoning strategies and Transport Oriented Development (TOD) to the City of Ryde to ensure the purchase and future management of the TG Millner Fields.

Clr 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.

TG Millner Field Planning Proposal

The City of Ryde has received a Planning Proposal concerning the TG Millner Fields at 146-150 Vimiera Road, Marsfield. This proposal seeks to rezone the site from RE2 – Private Recreation to a combination of R2 – Low Density Residential and RE1 – Public Recreation. If approved, this would pave the way for the construction of approximately 132 homes.

While Council is committed to the acquisition of the land to safeguard open space for future generations, this acquisition process remains separate from the planning proposal. Council has a legal obligation to assess this Planning Proposal on its own merits, based on strategic policies and documents.

The application will be reported to a Ryde Local Planning Panel meeting (LPP), administered by DPHI, which will provide an independent review and advice. The Panel's decision will then be reported to an Ordinary Council meeting.

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