

Council demands rethink on Ivanhoe Estate concept design

Published on 28 February 2019



The City of Ryde has voiced its opposition to the concept design for Ivanhoe Estate, requesting an urgent meeting with the State Government to ask for a reduction in the development's size, scale and density.

Under the State Government's plans, 858 trees will be removed to make way for approximately 3,500 new dwellings – a 1250% increase on the 259 dwellings that were previously located at Ivanhoe Estate.

In calling for a significant revision of the concept design for the Ivanhoe Estate, Council said the eastern side of Ivanhoe Estate should be rezoned to an E2 Environmental Conservation area to protect existing vegetation and ensure stronger conservation management.

The move comes after the City of Ryde previously raised concerns about the Ivanhoe Estate concept design.

In a submission, Council claimed the concept design would have a negative impact on the endangered forest of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark trees as well as drastically change the landscape character of the area, inadequate building setbacks between the surrounding streets and Shrimptons Creek.

Council's concerns have been echoed by the Office of Environment and Heritage, which stated the removal of trees may negatively impact the native habitat of local wildlife including the population of Powerful Owls currently located in the area.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Jerome Laxale, said the Ivanhoe Estate concept design in its current form would create an “ecological disaster”.

“The Ivanhoe Estate is a prime example of the State Government’s overdevelopment agenda. This is state-owned land that this government wants to overdevelop with 3500 units,” Clr Laxale said.

“The removal of trees is unprecedented for any one site in the City of Ryde and not enough has been done in the planning of the proposed development to avoid directly impacting the threatened ecological communities in the area.

“The State Government needs to revise its overdevelopment plans for Ivanhoe Estate and include enhanced tree retention, reduced building footprint and more open space for the community. It also needs to guarantee the conservation of the Shrimptons Park Corridor and protect significant trees located along Epping Road.”

Council has also asked that the State Government complete an Aboriginal cultural assessment to be undertaken prior to the determination of the concept plan, as was recommended by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Venture Cafe to drive innovation at Macquarie Park

Published on 26 February 2019



Venture Café Sydney has been officially launched in Macquarie Park, marking the arrival of the globally-recognised network to Australia.

Venture Café Sydney is the eighth and newest member of the Venture Café Global network, joining Boston, Tokyo and other international cities as Venture Café locations.

The aim of Venture Café is to promote innovation and foster collaboration through staging weekly programs and events that build relationships between students, start-ups, entrepreneurs, corporates, investors and other organisations.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said Council was proud to be a partner of Venture Café given the benefits it will bring to Macquarie Park.

“Venture Café will add another layer to Macquarie Park’s strong economic credentials by providing an outlet to attract local start-ups as well as new and innovative ideas that will lead to more commercial diversity and employment opportunities for the area.

“Despite some recent comments by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian implying that Macquarie Park is ‘not cool’, the fact of the matter is that Macquarie Park has never been stronger. It is an economic powerhouse and a destination for 1,900 businesses and 62,000 employees,” Cllr Laxale said.

More information on Venture Café Sydney can be found at venturecafesydney.org.

The launch of Venture Café Sydney follows a number of new initiatives launched by the City of Ryde to improve the amenities and open space in and around Macquarie Park.

This includes upgrades to Wilga Park, which will feature new amphitheatre terracing, outdoor seating and public artworks, and the Smart Cities Project that will bring free public Wi-Fi and other technologies to areas of Macquarie Park.

Response to comments on A Current Affair regarding ownership of Jurds Lane

Published on 21 February 2019

City of Ryde would like to clarify comments made on A Current Affair (ACA) on 21 February 2019 regarding the ownership of Jurds Lane in Ryde.

Council has never owned the land in question. The land has been owned by the Estate of William Star since the 1860s. This is confirmed in a report that Council commissioned in 2016.

As it is a deceased estate, Council undertook further investigations and subsequently identified a successor as to the title of the land.

With the consent of the successor, Council forwarded his details to Mr and Mrs Marcellino in order to facilitate negotiations between them to purchase the land.

The claim made by ACA that Council spent \$50,000 on this matter is not correct, as it was substantially less. The ACA reporter never sought clarification from Council on the total amount that was spent, hence their error.

Council considers that this is a private property issue between Mr and Mrs Marcellino and the owner of the land in question.

Soraya in the spotlight: Helping new and settled migrants

Published on 20 February 2019



Soraya Devi Raju

The City of Ryde will stage a series of [free workshops](#) that are designed to assist new and settled migrants integrate into the Australian lifestyle and culture.

The suburbs that make up the City of Ryde have a high migrant population with more than 40 per cent of residents having migrated to the area from overseas.

The four free workshops commence in March and will be facilitated by Soraya Devi Raju who is a migrant herself and the founder of Migrate Success.

We asked Soraya to explain some of the challenges new and settled migrants face in Australia and how her workshops help people integrate better and create new opportunities for them.

What are the major challenges both new and settled migrants face in Australia?

Skilled migrants arrive with much optimism with the view that their qualifications will give them an immediate entry into the Australian workforce. That is often not the case.

It is important to understand the Australian workplace and environment. Many migrants come from countries with hierarchical cultures where technical skills were

much more valued than soft skills. Therefore, they don't understand the importance of soft skills.

In Australia, we focus on both technical and soft skills. Understanding the unique Australian egalitarian culture and humour is also a challenge.

As a migrant yourself, what challenges did you face when you first immigrated to Australia?

My Malaysian accent was perceived as a problem initially even though I spoke English fluently. As a result, I found it difficult to speak up at meetings and make positive contributions. Joining Toastmasters was a huge benefit which gave me confidence.

It took me a while to make close friends. Most of the time, I showed the initiative to follow up with like-minded people. I joined organisations and my love for AFL football was certainly a connection.

One of your workshops provides advice on how migrants can apply for jobs and prepare for job interviews. In your experience, how much does Australia's job recruitment process differ to that from other countries?

The resume is critical and should be succinct– it should be targeted to the job you are applying. In Australia, we focus on a skills criteria system and evidence-based examples to show you can do the job.

I have reviewed resumes from countries such as Korea where your whole life story is on the resume – they tend to be many pages and include personal details which should not be included. I have even seen photos attached.

Every resume and covering letter should be specific to the job you are applying for.

Your workshops are described as a 'customised four-step program'. Could you please explain what that involves?

The four-step program was customised from my research and case studies involving problems that migrants have encountered. My program aims to help them stepping up to their goal, starting with first impressions.

Each step leads to the next one, guiding them towards their goal of job-seeking and being part of the Australian society. It is important that migrants attend all four workshops to realise the full benefits.

Why do you emphasise the importance of first impressions?

First impressions count – research shows visual image counts for 60 percent of first impressions. The remaining 40 percent is vocal and behaviour.

Dressing appropriately for interviews and work is very much part of first impressions in a competitive job environment.

Many people come from countries where they are not used to Western-style clothing. I have seen migrants struggling with their image. They feel empowered and confident when dressed appropriately.

What do you hope migrants can gain from attending your workshops?

As a migrant myself and having achieved success in the corporate world, I can show empathy and relate to them. I find that at my workshops, attendees like to relate to successful migrants – it gives them hope that success is achievable in Australia. In other words, they are hearing from the horse's mouth.

For example, a Somalian man at one of my workshops told me: "You and I are the same colour. If you can stand there talking to us feeling confident and successful, it gives me hope that I can do it too."

That is a moving testimony.

Mosquito helicopter treatment at Newington Wetland on Thursday

Published on 20 February 2019

A helicopter application of Bti will take place at Newington Nature Reserve Wetland on Thursday 21 February 2019 to control mosquito larval populations.

Spraying is scheduled to occur between 11.00am and 1.00pm, however, weather conditions or operational matters could cause it to be delayed until later in the day.

Treatment of the wetlands involves the application of a biological mosquito larvicide known as Bti. It is a nature-based product and impacts the target species of mosquito at a specific stage of larval development.

The larvicide is known to be safe to people, pets and the environment, and treatments are monitored by the University of Sydney's Department of Medical Entomology.

Advisory signage providing notification of spraying and the product used will be placed on the River Walk and other pathways surrounding the treatment area in accordance with SOPA's Pesticide Use & Notification Plan. Local businesses and residents will be notified through SOPA's relevant communication channels.

For more information visit our [Mosquitos page](#).

Celebrating International Women's Day

Published on 18 February 2019



March 8 marks International Women's Day, an annual celebration of women's achievements. The 2019 theme is 'Balance for Better' and City of Ryde is on board, with two major events planned to suit all ages and interests.

Women in Business forum - Friday 8 March

Join us on Friday 8 March at CSIRO Lindfield to hear from women who are recognised for making a change in the community.

The International Women's Day Forum highlights the City of Ryde's commitment to supporting women's leadership in taking on the challenges that face women in the community. The Forum is designed to be informative, interactive and entertaining with experienced guest speakers sharing their stories and insights into women's leadership.

Guest speakers include:

- Dr Cathy Foley, CSIRO's Chief Scientist
- Andrea Watson, founder and CEO of tech company Sparrows.io.

[Find out more about the Women in Business forum.](#)

International Women's Day forum - #BalanceforBetter - Saturday 9 March

Come and be inspired by women who have made a difference in ensuring a more gender-balanced world at this forum at the Civic Centre in Ryde. Take the opportunity to listen to a women's panel and take part in a Q&A session. There will also be live performances and music as women tell their stories. Share the company of other women and network over morning tea and free lunch.

Guest speakers include:

- Dee Madigan - Star of Gruen, Sky, Creative Director of Campaign Edge, author and speaker
- Jenna Price - Fairfax journalist and Senior Lecturer, Journalism Program, at the University of Technology Sydney.

Jenna has spent considerable time in Ryde and covered the 2007 election focusing on the seat of Bennelong. International Women's Day "concentrates the mind on the rights of women and girls... I only wish it was every day of the year", she said.

We are also lucky to have two incredible performers on the night:

- Gambirra - a Yolgnu woman living in Lake Macquarie and working with First Nation communities across NSW as a freelance artist, mentor and cultural arts educator
- Sara Saleh - award-winning Arab-Australian poet, human rights activist and long time campaigner for refugee rights and racial justice.

[Find out more about the International Women's Day forum.](#)

Status of Women Advisory Committee

These events are supported by the City of Ryde Status of Women Advisory Committee, which provides advice to Council how to improve participation and engagement by women in all aspects of community and civic life.

[Find out more about the Status of Women Advisory Committee.](#)

New Rowe Street East shopper car park in Eastwood one step closer

Published on 18 February 2019

A development application for the new Rowe Street East shopper car park in Eastwood has been lodged by the City of Ryde, bringing the project one step closer to realisation.

The new multi-storey shopper car park will be located at 53-71 Rowe Street, have a minimum of 150 spaces and – in a first for a City of Ryde-owned facility – will feature charging stations for electric vehicles.

Further Council is looking at appropriate car park time limits and other options to manage turnover of car spaces to support the retail area of Eastwood.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Jerome Laxale, said the new shopper car park was the biggest increase in public parking spaces in Eastwood in nearly 50 years.

He said the development application reflected the feedback from the community during consultation conducted by Council.

“Including features such as charging stations for electric vehicles ensures that the new shopper car park will cater for the needs of the community both currently and well into the future,” Clr Laxale said.

“This will be achieved without the destruction of Eastwood Oval, ensuring this Council has delivered on its promise to increase public parking in Eastwood and saving Eastwood Oval from the State Government’s proposed car park.”

It is anticipated construction work to build the new Rowe Street East shopper car park will begin in 2020.

The plans developed are part of Council’s efforts to address the chronic parking shortages currently crippling Eastwood while also revitalising the town centre and local economy.

In addition to the new Rowe Street East shopper car park, Council has also commenced consultation on concepts that propose to relocate the existing Glen Street car park on the western side of Eastwood to the Shaftsbury Road precinct at the edge of Eastwood town centre.

After construction of the Shaftsbury car park, the Glen Street car park site would be transformed into a public plaza and community hub.

[Click here](#) for more information on what proposals are being considered to transform Eastwood.

Work underway to upgrade Wilga Park

Published on 15 February 2019

Work is well and truly underway on upgrades to Wilga Park which once completed will transform the park into a dynamic outdoor space with facilities to enable it to stage community events.

The upgrades to Wilga Park are being made as part of the Shrimptons Creek Activation project. The project aims to connect parkland and open space along the Shrimptons Creek Corridor and create more recreation space for public space.

The upgrades will consist of the following:

- Amphitheatre terracing with concrete seating walls
- A new amenities building
- Improved path lighting and new access paths
- Entries to the park that provide a direct connection to Quandong Reserve
- A picnic area
- A new landscaped boundary with native grass and groundcover, plus a native tree canopy
- Two public artworks

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Jerome Laxale, said the upgrade to Wilga Park will provide the community with a first-class outdoor facility that will provide a public place for people to relax and connect with nature.

"Open spaces in our City are precious. Not only will I defend them from being lost, but am proud that we continue to upgrade them. Wilga Park will soon be a first-class outdoor facility that will provide a public place for people to relax and connect with nature," Clr Laxale said.

"Each of the upgrade features is a result of direct consultation with the community, ensuring that the new and improved Wilga Park will cater to everyone who either lives or works in Macquarie Park.

"An aspect I love about the upgrades is the fact it includes amphitheatre terracing and new lighting which will enable the venue to play host to night-time events, which will play a part in boosting the area's night-time economy and provide the community with more 'after 5' activities to enjoy."

Works on the upgrade are programmed to be completed by August 2019, weather permitting.

Wilga Park is closed to the public during the works period. Where required, there will be traffic control in place to assist with pedestrian access and vehicle movement around the park. The shared user path between Waterloo Road and Epping Road will be open and maintained during the construction period.

Transforming Eastwood

Published on 14 February 2019



Artist's impression of Eastwood Plaza

Eastwood Town Centre is a vibrant and well patronised shopping centre that services both the needs of the community and those from surrounding areas.

But it is also a town centre affected by chronic traffic and parking problems that have negative impacts on Eastwood businesses and hurt the local economy.

As a result, a range of major proposals are currently being considered to improve traffic and parking in Eastwood town centre while also creating new and modern open spaces for the community.

The following is a brief summary of the major Eastwood proposals being considered.

Glen Street shopper car park relocation and new open space



Artist's impression of proposed design of new shopper car park on Shaftsbury Road, Eastwood

What does it involve? Based on the findings of an independent Traffic and Parking Study, Council is gauging whether the community supports the relocation of the Glen Street car park to the nearby Shaftsbury Road Precinct.

The current site of the Glen Street car park would be transformed into a public outdoor area with the potential of a community facility and an active retail space also introduced into the vacated area.

Why has this been proposed? The independent Traffic and Parking Study commissioned by the City of Ryde modelled four scenarios for a new car park as a way to solve the traffic and parking issues impacting on Eastwood town centre.

Of these scenarios, Option 3B in which the Glen Street car park was relocated to the Shaftsbury Road Precinct was identified as the best option for traffic performance and would allow for approximately 150 additional car spaces for shoppers.

What next? The City of Ryde is currently undertaking consultation on whether the community supports Option 3B as well as the findings of the independent Traffic and Parking Study. This consultation is taking place until 13 March 2019.

The results of the consultation will be reported to Council for endorsement and funding if it is determined that the project is to progress any further. If the project is to progress planning considerations, investigative studies, environmental and stormwater considerations, detailed design and an approvals process will need to be completed prior to any works commencing.

[Find out more and have your say.](#)

Rowe Street East shopper car park



Artist's impression of the proposed design for the new Rowe Street shopper's car park

What does it involve? The City of Ryde will build a new multi-storey car park on 53-71 Rowe Street East as a way to address chronic parking shortages for shoppers in the area.

The shopper car park will have a minimum of 150 parking spots and will be built at the current site of the Rowe Street East car park in order to support the proper functioning of the eastern town centre of Eastwood. In a first for a City of Ryde-owned facility, the Rowe Street East shopper car park will feature charging stations for electric vehicles

Why has this been proposed? The new shopper car park is consistent with the key findings of the independent Traffic and Parking Study which identified that additional car parking spaces were needed on the eastern side of Eastwood, but pointed to evidence that commuter parking spots in Rowe Street East car park would be unsuitable.

Once completed it will be the biggest increase in public parking places in Eastwood in almost 50 years.

What next? A development application has been lodged by the City of Ryde. A lot of the information contained in the development application reflects feedback from the community during consultation conducted by the City of Ryde.

It is anticipated construction work to build the new Rowe Street East shopper car park will begin in the first half of 2020 and, weather permitting, the car park will be operational by the end of 2020.

Eastwood Plaza upgrade



Artist's impression of the draft concept for the upgraded Eastwood Plaza

What does it involve? The City of Ryde is considering whether to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) for the upgrade of Eastwood Plaza.

Some of the key aspects of the draft concept plan include retention of the arbour, performance stage at the eastern end, central open area for tai chi, market stalls and a regraded western end that includes raised seating areas, a new water feature, street furniture and trees.

Why has this been proposed? Property developer Yuhu Group Australia has made the voluntary offer to the City of Ryde in association with a development application for the redevelopment of Eastwood Shopping Centre.

Aside from upgrading Eastwood Plaza, the voluntary offer also includes the dedication to the City of Ryde of five affordable housing apartments and upgrading pedestrians spaces surrounding the remainder of the Eastwood Shopping Centre (beyond Eastwood Plaza).

What next? The City of Ryde is currently undertaking consultation on the community's views of the proposed Eastwood Plaza upgrade. This consultation is taking place until 27 February 2019.

Following this, the VPA will be return to Council for final determination. Yuhu Group Australia's development application is to be determined by the Sydney North Planning Panel following public exhibition and Council's final decision on the VPA.

[Find out more and have your say.](#)

What's happening in Eastwood - map

Check out the map below to see what's happening and where.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN EASTWOOD



NEW SHAFTSBURY ROAD CAR PARK

- Replaces current car park at Glen Street
- 600 spaces (150 additional shopper parking spaces)

EASTWOOD PLAZA UPGRADE

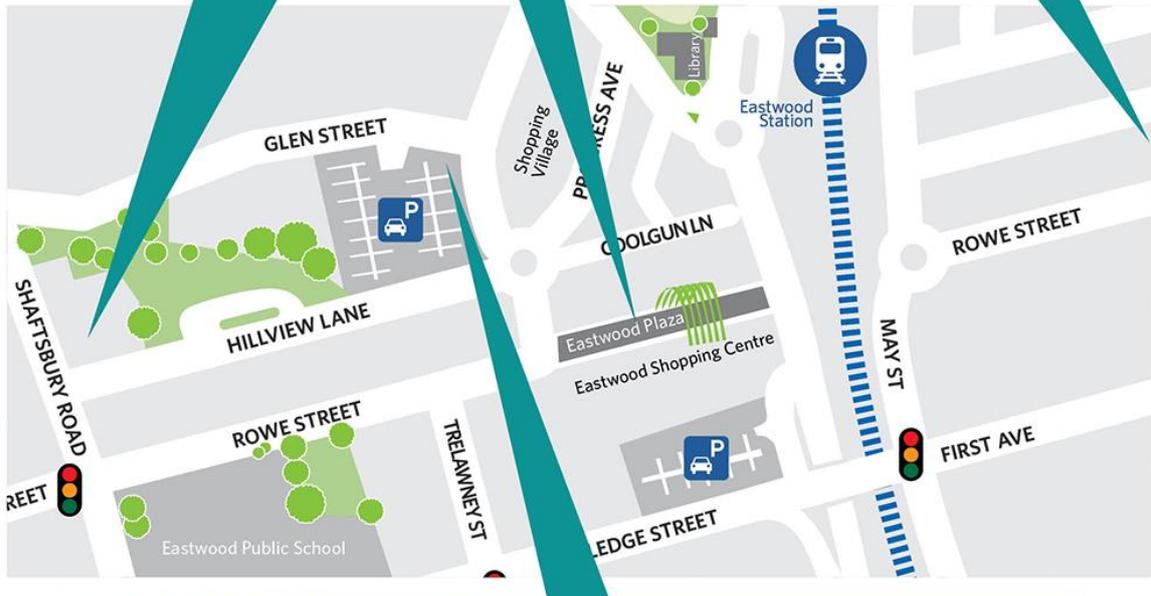
Draft concept plan includes:

- Retaining arbour
- Performance stage
- Central open area
- Water feature
- Raised seating areas



NEW ROWE STREET SHOPPER CAR PARK

- Minimum 150 spaces
- Electric vehicle charging stations



NEW PLAZA AND COMMUNITY FACILITY

- In place of current car park
- New public plaza
- Ground level retail space
- New prospective community facility

First images released of new shopper car park and plaza in Eastwood

Published on 06 February 2019



Car park concept design looking from the t-section of Shaftsbury Road and Hillview Lane

The City of Ryde has released the first concepts of how a new shopper car park and public plaza on the western side of Eastwood could look once completed.

The concepts being developed by Council look to relocate the existing Glen Street car park to the Shaftsbury Road precinct at the edge of Eastwood town centre. The Glen Street car park site, after the construction of the Shaftsbury carpark, would be transformed into a public plaza and community hub, creating a more vibrant open space for the community.

Consultation on the concepts will commence next week (13 February), in which residents, community groups and the local business community will be invited to have their say on the proposals.

The new car park would increase the number of off-street car parking spaces currently available on the western side of Eastwood from 450 spaces to approximately 600 spaces.

In addition, Council will engage in consultation with the relevant stakeholders to rebuild vital community facilities, which may include a new community hall, youth space and an occasional childcare centre.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Jerome Laxale, said the concepts would provide enormous benefits to everyone in Eastwood.

“This new vision for Eastwood will address the chronic traffic and parking issues on the Western side while also providing a vibrant public space for generations to enjoy,” Clr Laxale said.

“I was elected to help solve problems that have plagued Eastwood for decades. This vision presents more parking, more open space and new community facilities for our community to enjoy.

“I would encourage everyone to take part in the consultation process so they are aware of what is being proposed and to ensure their views are taken into consideration by Council before the concepts are further developed.”

Members of the community will also be able to have their say on the Draft Summary Report – Eastwood Traffic and Parking Study, with the consultation period for the study running concurrently with the consultation on the concepts for the new public plaza and car park on the western side of Eastwood.

The independent study investigated several options for off-street car parking in Eastwood and found that moving the Glen Street car park to the Shaftsbury Road precinct would improve the traffic conditions in the area. The study also found that adding commuter car parking to the town centre, in addition to the retail component, would cause traffic gridlock.

The new car park on the western side of Eastwood would be in addition to the new multi-storey short stay car park that Council will build at 53-71 Rowe Street, on the eastern side of the town centre.

Tablet lending trial begins at Eastwood Library

Published on 05 February 2019



A new trial has commenced at Eastwood Library this week, which will provide members of the public with free access to tablets while at the library.

The trial will be used to assess the feasibility and community response to providing the free tablet loans.

All of the tablets available to the public at Eastwood Library have internet access and a range of apps that will allow users to access e-books, e-magazines and e-newspapers.

If the trial is deemed successful Council will explore the options for providing an appropriate mix of desktop computers and mobile devices at all City of Ryde libraries.

The free tablet trial follows the reopening of the refurbished Eastwood Library in December.

Access to the free tablet loans are only available to [City of Ryde Library members](#), with the devices only allowed to be accessed while members are present at Eastwood Library and Photo ID is required. The tablets will not be allowed to be removed from the library at any time.

As part of the reopening, improvements were made to the library's layout and decor and a new digital reading table was installed that allows members to access thousands of international newspapers and magazines in various languages.

The free tablet trial will be staged over the next six months.

NSW Government Combustible Cladding Register registration reminder

Published on 05 February 2019

The NSW Government would like to remind building owners about the deadline to register certain residential and public buildings on the [NSW Cladding Registration portal](#) if they have external combustible cladding.

Following tragic incidents in Melbourne and London, new laws commenced in October 2018 for buildings with combustible cladding. These are the:

- [Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment \(Identification of Buildings with Combustible Cladding\) Regulation 2018](#)
- [State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment \(Exempt Development – Cladding and Decorative Work\) 2018](#).

The laws are part of a whole-of-government response to the fire safety risks posed by external combustible cladding.

Registration and identification of these buildings helps Fire and Rescue NSW to respond accordingly in the case of a fire and educate occupants about additional fire prevention steps that can be taken. It also helps councils to decide whether any assessment or rectification actions are necessary.

For buildings occupied before 22 October 2018, the deadline for registration is 22 February 2019. Owners of new buildings will be required to register their building within four months of the building first being occupied.

The registration requirements are simple and building owners only need basic information about their building to register. You do not need to engage an expert for this.

For more information on the regulation go to the [Department of Planning website](#). Answers to frequently asked questions are available [here](#). This includes supplementary frequently asked questions for building owners have now been released.

This is part of the work being done by the inter-agency [Fire Safety and External Wall Cladding Taskforce](#).

Olympic-sized ice rink confirmed for Macquarie Centre redevelopment

Published on 01 February 2019

In a huge win for the Ryde community, the owner of Macquarie Centre – AMP Capital – has today confirmed that any future redevelopment of the shopping centre will include an Olympic-sized ice rink. [View AMP's media release.](#)

The announcement comes just days after the City of Ryde held an extraordinary Council meeting in which it expressed its opposition to the proposed closure of the Macquarie Ice Rink and stated that any redevelopment of the shopping centre needed to retain an Olympic-sized ice rink.

During the meeting a large number of local residents and users of the ice rink voiced their disapproval of the closure of the community venue in front of a packed public gallery.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, welcomed the news from AMP Capital.

“This is a huge win for people power and will ensure the beloved Macquarie Ice Rink will remain a part of our community for generations to come,” Cllr Laxale.

“It was simply not right that planning laws introduced by the NSW Government were going to allow for the demolition of the ice rink, in complete defiance of public opinion.

“Council was prepared to dig in and do all it can to protect this beloved venue, but thankfully AMP Capital has listened to the concerns of the community and has promised that any future redevelopment of Macquarie Centre will include an Olympic-sized ice rink.

“There is still a lot of work to do and I will continue to push for the retention of the rink in any Stage 1 redevelopment of the centre.”

AMP Capital lodged a Stage 1 development application in December for the partial redevelopment of Macquarie Centre, which revealed that the current site for the Macquarie Ice Rink would be demolished.

AMP Capital subsequently put a pause on the development application to consult further with the community following widespread concern.

Despite the pause, public consultation on the development application is still ongoing, with Council resolving that the public consultation period be extended until 1 March 2019.

Timeline

September 2014 – NSW State Government changes the zoning requirements of the area where Macquarie Centre is located as part of its Herring Road priority precinct. These changes allowed for additional building heights from 10 storeys to 37 storeys.

September 2015 – The Ryde Local Environmental Plan was updated to reflect the State Government changes.

October 2016 – Council resolves to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with owners of Macquarie Centre, AMP Capital, to provide the community with a Library and Creative Hub as part of the redevelopment of Macquarie Centre. This approval was to enter into a VPA between Council and AMP Capital and did not constitute approval of a development application, as applications of this nature require approval by a Planning Panel convened by the NSW State Government.

November 2016 – A development application for the concept of the Macquarie Centre redevelopment was determined by the former Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel. The panel approved the Concept Development Application unanimously. This Concept Development Application did not approve demolition, building works or the final use of floor space in the centre, which would be subject to future development applications.

December 2018 – A development application is lodged seeking approval for partial works of the Macquarie Centre redevelopment. This application will also be determined by the Sydney North Planning Panel.

January 2019 – The application for partial works is placed on public exhibition. The developer puts a pause on the development application to consult further with the community. An extraordinary Council meeting is called on Tuesday 29 January 2019 to discuss the future of the Macquarie Ice Rink.

February 2019 – After Council expresses its opposition to the proposed closure of the Macquarie Ice Rink, AMP Capital announces any redevelopment for Macquarie Centre will include an Olympic-sized ice rink.

Response to misleading comments about Blenheim Park properties

Published on 01 February 2019

The City of Ryde would like to respond to a media report in today's Daily Telegraph entitled 'Pair lose home but no compo' and subsequent media coverage made about these Blenheim Park properties, including on A Current Affair.

The claims made are misleading, inaccurate and do not reflect that Council is both acting in the best interests of its ratepayers, the wider community and also following the correct legislative process.

This is a complex issue that has stretched over three years.

The owners of the properties in question submitted a planning proposal to change the zoning of the area from a low residential density zoning to a high residential density zoning. This proposal was rejected by both Council and the Department of Planning in 2016.

Following this and subsequent discussions with the property owners, the City of Ryde resolved to acquire the three properties at Blenheim Park and submit a Planning Proposal to have the land re-zoned to Public Recreation in order to provide more open space for the community. In 2017, the NSW Department of Planning approved Council's rezoning request and the properties were compulsorily acquired in August 2018.

Since then, Council has made every effort to compensate the owners for the acquisition. In doing so, it has followed the exact process required under the relevant legislation in compensating the owners, including accommodating a hardship application for acquisition that was initiated by the owners.

At no point has Council breached the relevant legislation or breached the hardship claim.

Property NSW issued the final Valuer General's determination late on 21 December 2018 and Council has 45 days to review and action the next steps.

Council is considering the Valuer-General's determination and the basis on which it was made as Council is responsible for the proper management of public funds.

If Council simply went ahead with the purchase and was later found to have over-paid for the properties, it would fairly face criticism from the community and ratepayers. Council is therefore fulfilling its duty to ensure that ratepayer money is not wasted.

It was also not until after acquisition that Council discovered that the properties had been tenanted by the previous owners – they had not informed Council of this previously. Again, Council, as a landlord, has a legislative responsibility to identify

those tenants and secure the properties to make them safe. A failure to do so would once again put Council and ratepayers at risk of subsequent compensation claims.

As with all of the parties involved The City of Ryde is seeking a swift resolution of the matter. The sooner a new park and recreation area is in place for the community the better. That cannot be at the expense though of ignoring the due process, legislation, safety or most importantly, at the risk of leaving Ryde ratepayers out of pocket.