

Monday 16 January 2012.

RYDE CIVIC PRECINCT PLANNING PROPOSAL – THE FACTS

City of Ryde Mayor Clr Artin Etmekdjian has moved to correct the public record about the Ryde Civic Centre Precinct Planning Proposal.

“While I welcome debate on this important project for Ryde, I am dismayed at the inaccurate information being circulated by project opponents,” said Clr Etmekdjian.

“In the interests of fair, open and honest discussion, these are the facts surrounding the proposed redevelopment:

- The proposed development will deliver new and much needed community facilities, including a multipurpose performance space and new civic chambers.
- To replace the current building, accommodate Council staff and provide new civic facilities on the Civic Centre site, without the support of a development partner, will cost residents more than \$78 million, requiring a rate increase of 16% over 20 years.
- \$12.5 million is required over the next five years just to maintain the current building.
- Council has set strict design criteria for any future development of the site to ensure an environmentally sustainable and visually acceptable outcome.
- We are seeking changes to the height of the proposed development to 24 storeys (the residential apartments above Top Ryde City shopping centre is 17 storeys). We are also seeking to reduce the overall bulk of the development from 100,000sqm down to 60,000sqm. This will deliver a taller, more slender skyline more suited to this iconic site than the dense and bulky structure currently permitted.
- Future traffic impact on local roads has already been addressed through the provision of road infrastructure and a traffic management plan. This \$40 million outlay was part of the construction of Top Ryde City shopping centre and has been paid for by the owners of the shopping centre.
- Residential growth in the City of Ryde is estimated at 4% over the next 10 years. Focusing this growth around town centres can keep high density development out of residential suburban streets. This is in keeping with our Community Strategic Plan.
- Council has received a total of 2,195 submissions following extensive community consultation and exhibition periods. This represents just under 2% of the total residents of the Ryde LGA.
- Amendments reflecting community comments have already been incorporated into the proposal.

“Council has always acted in accordance with advice from highly respected urban planners and designers, in a bid to find alternate solutions to over-development of the site – ones which generate less traffic than what was approved by the previous State Government,” said Cllr Etmekdjian.

“Local Councils across NSW have significant challenges to appropriately maintain and renew their assets. This proposal is part of a larger solution to minimise the cost impacts of asset renewal on our ratepayers by unlocking the value of this underdeveloped site. For this reason, I believe that the proposal is in the interests of our broader community.”

“I urge people not to be swayed by narrow and sectional interests who are not telling the truth about the Planning Proposal and redevelopment of this iconic site.

“This Council has nothing to gain by hiding any aspect of the Proposal from the community and to suggest otherwise is misguided.”

Ends

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