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DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR THE NEW HEART OF RYDE APPROVED

The Sydney North Planning Panel has unanimously approved the application to redevelop the Ryde Civic Centre site into the community-supported New Heart of Ryde.

This project will deliver a four-fold increase in community facilities without the introduction of any residential development on the site.

The centrepiece of the project will be a new multi-purpose and cultural building dedicated to community use.

This building will feature the Edna Wilde Performance Hall – named after long-serving Ryde Eisteddfod Chairman and former City of Ryde Councillor and Mayor, Edna Wilde OAM – which will be able to seat up to 700 people.

The multi-purpose and cultural building will also include public activity rooms, meeting rooms, function space capable of hosting art exhibitions, amenities and food premises.

An additional commercial building will also be built on the site which will house Council staff as well as external tenants. Other features include a centrally located public plaza, extensive landscaping works, direct and accessible pedestrian links, as well as 236 on-site basement car spaces.

The capital investment value of the project is \$108 million and within Council's budget parameters. Council will retain 100% ownership of the site and the project will be completely funded without raising rates or reducing services.

In approving the application, the Sydney North Planning Panel said The New Heart of Ryde "will make a significant positive contribution to the Ryde Town Centre".

The panel added that the development "is of high-quality architectural design that has responded to the location within the mixed-use area, while providing a form of development consistent with the character of the precinct".

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said The New Heart of Ryde had the support of the community with 85% indicating they support the redevelopment proposal.

"The New Heart of Ryde will deliver the facilities that our community has been crying out for," Cllr Laxale said.

"It will allow our local schools, community groups and multicultural institutions to finally have the ability to stage their major events in the City of Ryde and collaborate with other schools, groups and institutions in their field. It will also provide a major boost to our burgeoning arts industry.

"As we navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, this development will also aid the economic recovery of both Ryde and the North-Western region of Sydney by generating and sustaining jobs throughout its construction and activating and revitalising this key town centre upon its completion."

Media Contact: Michael East, City of Ryde Communications
p • 9952 8083 m • 0466 091 059 e • meast@ryde.nsw.gov.au