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Mayor sets record straight for Ryde Civic Precinct redevelopment

City of Ryde Mayor Artin Etmekdjian has urged the community to consider the facts surrounding proposed changes to planning controls for the Ryde Civic Precinct site.

“The proposal will be on re-exhibition until 25 November 2011 following a review and recommendation by an independent planning expert. It then needs to go back to Council for endorsement before being considered by the Department of Planning Infrastructure.

“The revised planning controls need to be approved, to allow the potential redevelopment of the Ryde Civic Precinct,” said Cllr Etmekdjian.

“This proposal has never been about imposing 24 storey tower blocks on the community, as some have claimed.

“Our aim has always been to get the planning controls right and this has been achieved using independent planning experts.

“Council has adopted their recommendation to re-exhibit changes to the initial concept plan. In addition, any design for a future development will be reviewed by an independent panel of industry experts against set criteria around design excellence, sustainability and functionality.

“The redevelopment of the Ryde Civic Precinct was first considered in 1995. The current building is costing significant funds for maintenance and the time for stalling and procrastination is over,” he said.

“The figures speak for themselves. Council will have to spend \$12.5 million over the next five years just to keep the building running.

“We’ve allocated \$690,000 for air conditioning, just to get us through this summer. To upgrade the existing buildings for another 20 years life and amalgamate staff in the one location will cost Council \$58 million. A debt of that size would be a huge burden for the City of Ryde community.

“We need to work together to finally get something done, to deliver a good outcome for our community, where others have been unable or unwilling.”

Cllr Etmekdjian said the proposal was an important part of the continued renewal of Ryde’s Town Centre.

“This is an exciting opportunity for a sustainable and iconic building on this important site.

“Council’s approach is financially prudent and one which unlocks funds to deliver much needed facilities without a substantial debt burden on Council and the community.

“I stress that this project has several significant steps to go, with many more opportunities for the community to have a say in the final plans for the site.

“We have been open and transparent about what needs to happen, and I am committed to keeping everyone informed as the project progresses.”

The Planning Proposal must be approved by the State Government before a competitive tendering and design process can occur, which will include another public consultation and exhibition period.

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