

Tuesday 22 November 2011.

## **CITY OF RYDE SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON CIVIC PRECINCT**

City of Ryde wants to set the record straight in response to an anonymous smear campaign about plans for the Civic Centre site on Devlin Street.

Mayor Artin Etmekdjian said he was disappointed that opponents have decided to post anonymous and inaccurate flyers throughout the suburb.

“The proposal to amend the planning controls is not about approving two 24-storey residential towers,” Cllr Etmekdjian said.

“Our aim is to get the planning controls right, so we have a framework for looking at the best options for redeveloping the site in the future.

“The current Civic Centre is not a listed heritage building and there has been overwhelming recognition by the community that it is past its use-by date and that the ongoing costs to maintain it are unsustainable.

“We need to look at how we can replace this ageing asset without incurring an ongoing financial burden on rate payers.”

Amending the planning controls will allow Council to consider the right option for the site, which would fund new Council Chambers, community facilities and multipurpose performance space at the current location, as well as consolidating Council’s administration staff into one building.

“This is an important proposal and Council has undertaken an extensive consultation program to ensure the whole community have been provided with an understanding of what this proposal is about,” Cllr Etmekdjian said.

The plan to amend the planning controls was first placed on public exhibition for six weeks. The proposal has since been reviewed by an independent planning expert before being amended and placed on public exhibition for another four weeks.

“Unfortunately, the anonymous individuals behind the smear campaign have gone out of their way to distort the facts and mislead the rest of the community. This scaremongering is simply dishonest.”

Cllr Etmekdjian confirmed that he expected the revised planning proposal to be considered by Council soon after the current public exhibition closes and if supported it would go to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure for final determination.

“I want to assure the community that this is just one step in an ongoing process to continue the revitalisation of the Ryde town centre. The community will have more chances to have their say when this proposal moves to the next stage,” Cllr Etmekdjian said.