

Wednesday 11 April 2012

COUNCIL STAFF RELOCATION DECISION

Decisive action has been taken by the City of Ryde to relocate approximately 40 Council staff working from offices in the Argyle Centre (Blaxland Road, Ryde), following a report on the unsatisfactory condition of the building and OH&S issues affecting the work environment.

Councillors endorsed the recommendation to relocate all Community Life staff at the Argyle Centre (site of the old Argyle Theatre) to new premises as soon as practicable, after which the building will be closed.

General Manager, John Neish, said: "The condition and maintenance of Council buildings and infrastructure has been the subject of previous reports to Council. In particular, working conditions for a large number of Council office staff has been of great concern, both at the Argyle Centre and the Civic Centre.

"The recent period of sustained wet weather has brought the matter at the Argyle Centre to a head with further issues emerging including mould, infestation and water penetration into the building.

"Council commissioned expert consultants to undertake air quality and mould assessment reports of both the office area and the community hall at the Argyle Centre. While these reports concluded that the environment was safe, with the exception of some areas, the conditions fall far short of contemporary work place standards and the building has a large range of expensive problems which need addressing."

The Council's Immunisation Clinic and Volunteer Outreach Office have already been relocated and community groups using the Argyle Hall at the side of the Argyle Centre are in the process of being offered alternative premises.

Mr Neish added: "It has long been the Council's vision to relocate staff from a number of sites around our City to a central location. We are hopeful that the current tendering process for the redevelopment of the Ryde Civic Precinct will help us achieve this outcome, however, this is still some years off and action had to be taken to resolve the current situation."

Two sites have been identified as potential accommodation and the relocation is expected to be completed by September this year. Council has allocated approximately \$1.19 million from the Property Investment Reserve to cover the cost of relocation.