

Wednesday 13 June 2012

## SETBACK TO RYDE CIVIC PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

Moves to delay a vote to progress the redevelopment of Ryde Civic Precinct is a great setback for the Ryde community, said the City of Ryde Mayor, Councillor Artin Etmekdjian.

At a meeting last night, the Council voted to proceed with negotiations with Lend Lease, the preferred development partner. However, a rescission motion was lodged immediately after the meeting. This means that the proposal will go back to Council for discussion and resolution at its 26 June meeting.

“Council was ready to deliver, subject to negotiations, with the first stage completed in three years, and the entire project completed by the end of 2017,” said Cllr Etmekdjian.

The Lend Lease proposal includes:

- A 400 seat modern, special purpose Performance Venue – suitable for concerts, plays, the Ryde Eisteddfod, recitals, lectures, community events (and replaces the current Civic Hall);
- An open-air Public Square as large as *La Piazza* in Top Ryde City shopping centre;
- Three multi-function rooms for Council meetings and community use with total seating capacity of 255;
- 86 additional car parking spaces;
- Easier access to Parkes Street for vehicles and pedestrians;
- Fully accessible community facilities.

“The vote to go ahead with this development is a decision based on good value and commonsense, with benefits for our community. The project can be delivered with:

- No rate increases;
- An estimated value to Council’s balance sheet of \$79 million of value, putting us in a stronger financial position for the future; and
- New civic and administration facilities *remaining in community ownership on the land on which they are situated.*”

Councillor Etmekdjian said it was a great shame some Councillors had succumbed to fear mongering and misinformation by some elements of the community.

“I am saddened that the rescission motion means that Council might fail to show the leadership and vision to progress the redevelopment plan,” said Cllr Etmekdjian.

“To patch up the existing building will be throwing good money after bad.

“Ryde needs to be ready for our future and this project helps to do just that. It promises:

- A 5 Green Star rating, demonstrating the City of Ryde's commitment to environmental sustainability;
- All buildings fully accessible (unlike the current facilities that do not meet accessibility standards);
- Improved civic facilities that address the failings of the current buildings;
- Local jobs and prosperity for local businesses; and
- Future accommodation needs.

“It's a missed opportunity which will end up costing ratepayers many millions in the coming years, leaving them with a large debt, if the project does not proceed.”

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