

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

FINANCIAL BURDEN

In last week's column, I mentioned that an external review of City of Ryde's Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs) was conducted following the implementation of an Action Plan to rectify the improper transfer of \$95 million in funds from Restricted Reserves to the Ryde Central project and other accounts. That review, which commenced in May 2023, investigated the financial implications and liabilities that VPAs imposed on Council, with findings presented to Councillors on 20 August 2023. I should explain that these voluntary agreements allow developer contributions such as the dedication of land at no cost to Council, monetary contributions, any other material public benefit or any combination of these for a public purpose. Conducted by Nexia Australia, the review focussed on 17 VPAs that were either operating

and/or executed, with Council's Asset Management team determining that the annual maintenance and renewal costs of these agreements totalled \$4.1 million. In addition to those costs, various VPAs require Council to fund the fit-out and operations of dedicated assets. The most notable is a VPA executed in November 2018 with AMP Capital that requires Council to spend an estimated \$30 million to fit-out a library and creative hub at the Macquarie Centre. Annual operating costs of the library are estimated at \$1.7 million. Council currently has no reserves set aside to fund those fit-out costs. As a result of the findings, Council resolved at its September 2023 Ordinary Meeting to include the financial impact of the VPAs in its Long-Term Financial Plan and to set aside available funds for any operational and capital

costs required by these VPAs, in particular the Macquarie Centre VPA. Along with the fall-out from the improper internal fund transfers, this imposes a significant financial burden on Council. We are committed to making good long-term strategic decisions that strengthen our financial position in the future.

GRANNY SMITH COUNTDOWN

Ryde's famous Granny Smith Festival is set to return on Saturday 19 October 2024 and the countdown has already begun. Be sure to save the date for a spectacular day in the heart of Eastwood as we celebrate the life and legacy of Maria Ann 'Granny' Smith and her famous apple. Stallholder, parade, performer, and volunteer applications open on Monday 1 July. For more information, sign up to our event e-newsletter at: ryde.events/GSF-eNewsletter



Sincerely,

Clr Trenton Brown – Mayor

Email: mayor@ryde.nsw.gov.au

Phone (via Customer Service):

9952 8222

LIBRARY NEWS

NAIDOC WEEK | KIRLI SAUNDERS: MEET THE AUTHOR AND STORYTIME

**TUE
9
JULY**

WHEN: Tuesday 9 July
TIME: 10.30 – 11.30am
WHERE: Ryde Library



Join us for NAIDOC Week with award-winning children's author Kirli Saunders (OAM) for a special Authors Talk and a poetry reading from a collection of her works.

Book now: www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/KirliSaunders



HAVE YOUR SAY

OPEN COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

You are invited to have your say about documents, projects and proposals that are currently on public exhibition, or provide feedback on services and concerns that affect the community.

- Economic Development Strategy and Night-Time Economy Strategy (Closes 30 June 2024)
- Draft Local Infrastructure Strategy (Closes 30 June 2024)
- Draft Media and Social Media Policy for Councillors (Closes 30 June 2024)

Want to find out more?

To find out more about one of the above projects or for information on how to provide feedback, please visit www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/haveyoursay or call Customer Service on 9952 8222.

EVENTS IN OUR CITY



KEEP THE FIRE BURNING! BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD

7-14 JULY 2024

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia between 7 – 14 July, to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Find out more: www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/NAIDOC

COMPETITION OPEN!

 City of Ryde



2024 Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize

- WORKSHOPS
- CASH PRIZES
- EXHIBITION

Entries close 28 July



For more information scan the QR code or visit ryde.events/SWAP

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