

**MM19/24 BLenheim PARK, NORTH RYDE – FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT GRANT - Mayor, Councillor Trenton Brown**
File Number: GRP/24/36 - BP24/430

As Councillors will be aware, a master plan was developed for the future embellishment of Blenheim Park in 2020, to ensure that satisfactory recreational facilities would be available for the growing Macquarie Park residential community. Council will recall that \$10 million of our property reserve was recently expended on the acquisition of 3 properties on Epping Road that provided the area required to allow the full master plan components for Blenheim Park to be implemented.

Following on from a commitment by the Federal Member of Bennelong at the 2022 election to provide \$8 million towards implementation of the master plan, City of Ryde staff have been working diligently with Infrastructure Australia to realise this grant. A funding agreement was executed in April and \$8 million has been confirmed to be provided through the Priority Community Infrastructure Program, to be administered by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts. This grant should be acknowledged, and it is greatly appreciated. It will support an additional \$4.7 million of funding from Council's reserves already identified for delivery of significant components of the transformative Blenheim Park Master Plan, which will benefit residents and visitors to this area for decades to come.

On 15 May 2024, Council was surprised to see an article appear in the TWT Weekly Times that featured a photo of one of our Councillors alongside the Federal Member for Bennelong on location in Blenheim Park. When Council staff had enquired about undertaking a similar photoshoot, we were advised that this was not possible, and that correct protocols should be followed, ensuring that Council, the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, and Local Government, and the local Federal Member should all be present at any official launch regarding this grant. Within the funding agreement with the Commonwealth, there are several requirements and obligations that Council and the Commonwealth must adhere to when making announcements in relation to the grant. Given the significant financial commitment the City of Ryde has already made to the project, I am disappointed the same courtesy was not extended to Council by the local Federal Member prior to the media article appearing on 15 May.

Therefore, I propose to write to Minister Catherine King, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, and Local Government, expressing Council's disappointment that its official spokesperson was not invited to attend this important announcement event. I also propose to write to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to seek clarification on whether the Federal Member for Bennelong met the required Ministerial standards in relation to grant announcements and engagement with grant recipients for such announcements and operated within the Code of Conduct for Ministers (including Assistant Ministers).

MM19/24 (continued)**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council write to:

- (a) Minister Catherine King, Minister for Infrastructure, expressing Council's disappointment that its official spokesperson was not included in the recent media announcement in relation to confirmation of the \$8 million grant funding for upgrade works in Blenheim Park under the federal governments Priority Community Infrastructure Program.
- (b) The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet seeking confirmation that the Federal Member for Bennelong met the relevant Ministerial Standards associated with making announcements associated with Federal Government Grants.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:

Councillor Trenton Brown
Mayor