

Thursday 29 May 2025

Ryde Mayor fights for green space as housing surges

City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown has penned an open letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and NSW Premier Chris Minns asking for assistance in the Ryde community's five-year battle to retain the iconic TG Millner Fields as green open space.

The letter, which is also addressed to other key State and Federal stakeholders, comes just days before a crucial rezoning decision on the 6.2ha site at Marsfield, in Sydney's north-west, is heard before the Sydney North Planning Panel (SNPP).

"We are reaching a critical moment in our community campaign to retain this vital site as active recreation open space," said Mayor Brown. "It is an essential part of Council's commitment to 'strike the right balance' between housing uplift and the infrastructure that must accompany increased density and population in our LGA.

"The City of Ryde is determined to be part of the solution to Sydney's housing crisis, and we will continue to exceed our housing targets – but State Government rezoning means that nearby Macquarie Park may see as many as 37,000 new homes over the next 15 years.

"The existing and future population of that district desperately needs to retain TG Millner as one of the few remaining large open space areas that can provide a place for families to picnic, for kids to kick a ball, and for local sporting teams to call home."

TG Millner's owners, North Ryde RSL – in conjunction with developers Winston Langley – want the current home of the Eastwood 'Woodies' Rugby Union club transformed into a housing development, with 132 low-rise dwellings.

They have resubmitted a proposal to rezone the TG Millner Fields site from RE2 – Private Recreation to a combination of R2 – Low Density Residential and RE1 – Public Recreation.

The initial rezoning proposal was rejected by the SNPP December 2022 as having 'failed to adequately demonstrate Strategic Merit'. It also found that TG Millner 'has the potential to contribute to the amount of open space needed to service the future population of Ryde LGA'.

An attempt to have the proposal adopted as a State Significant Development was subsequently rejected by the newly formed Housing Development Authority (HDA) in February 2025. It found the development failed to satisfy the objectives and criteria of the HDA Expression of Interest in a number of areas, including that it did not deliver more homes within the Housing Accord period, was not well-located and did not provide a positive commitment to affordable housing.

The City of Ryde has set aside funding for the compulsory acquisition of the site and is asking for both State and Federal assistance for its subsequent embellishment, in line with a joint funding agreement for the redevelopment of Leichhardt Oval in Sydney's inner-west announced by the Prime Minister in June 2024.

“If Leichhardt Oval is the ‘eighth wonder of the world’ then TG Millner must surely be the ninth,” said Mayor Brown.

“The North Ryde RSL Club proposal will not make a meaningful difference to our City’s housing needs in comparison with the benefits that will be gained by turning TG Millner into a thriving, vibrant community open space for active recreation.

“We have a deficit of 15 sporting fields today for our existing population and that will increase to a shortfall of up to 21 sports fields in 15 years’ time with the added population. You cannot keep increasing population without making additional community investments – and that includes the paths, the cycleways, the walkways, and the open space for active recreation.”

City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown is available for interview. His open letter is attached.

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