

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘THE NEW HEART OF RYDE’ TO DELIVER ENHANCED FACILITIES FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

The City of Ryde has endorsed new plans to commence consultation on an exciting redevelopment of the Ryde Civic Centre site, with Council retaining complete ownership and not increasing rates for this project.

Described as ‘The New Heart of Ryde’, a redeveloped Ryde Civic Centre site will see a four-fold increase in community space without the introduction of any residential development on the site.

Half of the space will house public meeting rooms, offices, childcare facilities, commercial and retail facilities, a plaza and open space, on-site parking and Council chambers.

The remaining half will be dedicated to a flexibly-designed cultural and community space that will cater to a large range of activities from concerts to theatre groups, dance classes, study groups, businesses and artists among others.

In research undertaken by the City of Ryde for its Community Strategic Plan, the community identified a need to plan for and enhance cultural and community facilities to meet increased demand and ensure equitable access for all sections of our community. This has since been reinforced by the feedback Council recently received from its Social Plan and Creativity Strategy community consultation process.

The City of Ryde has released indicative images of how the redeveloped Ryde Civic Centre site could look and will soon commence formal community consultation on the plans.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said the endorsement of the plans was a landmark moment for the City and would provide a roadmap for Council to create a new civic and community hub that is viable and financially sustainable.

“The New Heart of Ryde will be a low impact development that will address the growing demand within Ryde for a new and significant accessible space that will service a diverse range of community needs,” Cllr Laxale said.

“Importantly, based on strong community opposition to overdevelopment, this plan will not include cramming hundreds of apartments onto the site as has been previously proposed.

“An upgraded site has been talked about for a decade and millions of dollars have been wasted by councils of the past. Now is the time to act and provide enormous benefits for the community for generations to come.

“Given the importance of this project I would encourage all residents to take part in the community consultation which begins in June.”

The proposed redevelopment will be funded by a mix of Council Reserves and a loan to be serviced primarily by developer contributions. The project is financially sustainable and will not require an increase to Council rates, nor will it require any cuts to be made to essential services.

The New Heart of Ryde will also result in the relocation of Council staff from the current location back to the Civic Centre site, saving ratepayers millions in annual rental costs.

The proposed redevelopment was endorsed by Council after a number of scenarios were considered for the site where the existing Civic Centre and Civic Hall is located.

The Ryde Civic Centre is currently vacant, is unsuitable for occupation, and was deemed unsafe by SafeWork NSW in 2015.

The Civic Hall is the only active space on the site and is near the end of its lifespan. The entire site will soon be unusable and vacant, with the community at a loss of a large community space. A plan needs to be made now to continue the use of this site for our community and generations to come.

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