

Thursday 16 May 2013

Ryde Council calls on community to vote 'Yes' in referendum on local government

Ryde Council is calling on the community to stand up and vote 'Yes' in a referendum at the next federal election to protect the Australian Government's ability to directly fund councils for local road and community facility upgrades.

The Mayor, Cllr Ivan Petch, said for the past ten years the Australian Government has provided billions of dollars to councils nation-wide through the Roads to Recovery, Black Spot programs and Local Community Infrastructure programs.

"In fact since 2009 our Council has received over \$2million in vital Roads to Recovery funding," said Cllr Petch.

Local road upgrades using R2R joint funding include:

- Shaftsbury Road, Eastwood (Terry Rd - Glen St)
- Bridge Road, North Ryde (Watts Rd – Olive St)
- Osgathorpe Road, Gladesville (Tennyson Rd – Towns St)
- Quarry Road, Ryde (Lane Cove Rd – Arthur St, Woodbine Crs – Lane Cove Rd)
- Buffalo Road, Ryde (Smith St – Lane Cove Rd)
- Coxs Road, Ryde (Badajoz Rd – Blamey St)
- Khartoum Road, Macquarie Park (Talavera Rd – Waterloo Rd)
- West Parade, West Ryde (Miriam – Victoria Rds)

Black Spot projects jointly funded:

- Vimiera Road, Marsfield - improved signage and line marking
- Shaftsbury Road and Glen Street, Eastwood intersection (incl installation of a pedestrian refuge and traffic islands to improve intersection safety)
- Rowe Street, Eastwood, improved pedestrian facilities (in progress)

Federal support through the Local Community Infrastructure Program helped to fund local projects including the Ryde Community and Sport Centre at ELS Hall Park, Livvi's Place at Yamble Reserve, the Meadowbank Netball Courts and the Buffalo Creek Trail.

The Mayor continued: "Unfortunately due to recent High Court cases, including the challenge to the school chaplaincy scheme, the Australian Government's capacity to provide grants straight to Council for important community-building projects is at risk.

"It's essential that every council in Australia, including the City of Ryde, has financial certainty.

"A simple change to the Australian Constitution will allow for this direct funding to continue as it has for the past decade, and protect crucial grant programs for councils and communities.

"While the change to the Constitution will only be minor, its positive impact on Council finances and road infrastructure will be far-reaching in the long-term.

"This year alone, Ryde Council received \$423,684 for road upgrades.

"Without the Roads to Recovery funding, Council would have had to draw those funds from other services it provides or held the road upgrades over to another year.

“The proposed change to the Australian Constitution will not change the existing relationship between State and Local Governments, and councils will continue to be accountable to their communities as has always been the case.

“I strongly urge the City of Ryde community to think about what they will gain from this simple change to the Australian Constitution and vote ‘Yes’ at the referendum on 14 September 2013,” he said.

Ends

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