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PARRAMATTA COUNCIL'S HOSTILE TAKE OVER BID WILL SUCK THE LIFE BLOOD OUT OF RYDE'S ECONOMY

This week Parramatta Council has once again displayed its appalling arrogance by attempting to "take over" large parts of the City of Ryde in particular, Macquarie Park, in its bid to become 'Fit for the Future'.

The proposal totally consumes two-thirds of Ryde in a cash and land grab exercise by a reckless Council with no integrity. Parramatta Council is submitting this alternative to the State Government as a revenue raising exercise in an attempt to build a proper CBD that they have failed to establish over the past 50 years. They think that by simply drawing lines on a map to expand their boundaries, that they have the initiative and capability of managing a thriving \$10 Billion business economy at Macquarie Park.

The City of Ryde has conducted its own financial modelling and has confirmed that ratepayers in the western part of Ryde proposed in this merger with Parramatta, will experience rate increases ranging on average between 30 to 50%. The rate payers of Ryde will not be impressed with this solution to Local Government reform, as it will hit their hip pockets hard.

The City of Ryde provides excellent services and facilities to our community which has been validated by recent customer satisfaction surveys demonstrating an increase in our satisfaction rating of 83% in 2013 to 89% in 2015.

Ryde General Manager, Gail Connolly said: "our community have made it very clear to us that their preference is for the City of Ryde to enter into a Joint Regional Authority arrangement with Hunter's Hill and Lane Cove Councils and to ensure the City of Ryde is not split at all costs.

It is ironic that Parramatta Council's own engagement with their community on this issue, as outlined in their submission to IPART, stated that their proposed 'hostile take-over of Ryde' only had 15% of Parramatta residents supporting this option. Yet they proceed to steam ahead with a recommendation that completely goes against the views of their own community, at least I can say with confidence that Ryde is pursuing the option preferred by 92% of our residents."

Councillor Chung, the Chair of Council's Macquarie Park Forum said: "this action by Parramatta Council demonstrates a panicked attempt by a desperate Council to consume parts of Ryde. Of course the booming \$10 Billion business economy of the Macquarie Park business district is highly attractive to a Council that is struggling to create an effective CBD. The City of Ryde has worked hard with this business hub over many years to achieve its success and we won't be surrendering our 'Jewel in the Crown' without a fight."

"This is not just about Ryde Council protecting its turf. We all know Parramatta has ruined its commercial core by promoting and allowing super-high-rise residential developments in the CBD. I don't want to see the same thing happen to Sydney's second largest CBD in Macquarie Park. Protecting the economy and preserving the 90,000 jobs in Ryde is my highest priority"

Tony Abboud, President of the Ryde Business Forum said: “The greatest tragedy that can be inflicted on the Ryde community including its businesses both large and small, is to divide it into pieces that are taken over by other Councils.

The State Government is talking about Council mergers. It seems that Parramatta Council has interpreted this as meaning they can choose to take over areas to suit themselves. This is not about a land grab!

This is supposed to be about creating more efficiencies, to better serve the community! Parramatta Council’s strategy is obvious...to try and steal what will be potentially Australia’s 4th largest Commercial Hub, Macquarie Park. This is all about what’s best for Parramatta, with zero consideration for the Ryde community. Hopefully the State Government will see through this and keep Ryde as one, as we explore the best options”

Ministers Anthony Roberts and Victor Dominello have also publicly acknowledged the City of Ryde’s track record in developing Macquarie Park to be the State’s second largest business precinct. They have also stated that the City of Ryde should continue to control Macquarie Park’s future and should not be split.

The City of Ryde can guarantee that we can maintain our services and service standards and that we are financially sustainable as verified by the recent report released by IPART, which categorically states that the City of Ryde is ‘financially fit’. There are no guarantees what level of services and service standards will be provided by this proposal from Parramatta Council to City of Ryde residents.

Ryde General Manager, Gail Connolly concluded: “Our residents have pride in their history and unique identity, have confidence in the Council’s financial and governance performance and have a strong desire to be in control of their future.

The City of Ryde will always look after local interests, local residents and protect our residents from likely rate increases. Ryde, Lane Cove and Hunter’s Hill Councils have a superior option of a Joint Regional Authority which enjoys the support of our communities”.

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