

Wednesday 3 August 2016

PROPOSED SECOND LIFE FOR RYDE CIVIC CENTRE

City of Ryde Council has responded positively to a request from NSW Police Force, the Army and Emergency Services to allow the use of the soon to be vacated Ryde Civic Centre as a temporary training venue and to conduct a variety of exercises at the site.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said that while it was an unexpected request, it could be a suitable short-term reuse of the site. "The building has served the Ryde community for more than fifty years and now that is all but empty, the building can continue to have a life and purpose to benefit the wider community.

"With our population increasingly living in high rise buildings, it is important that emergency services are trained in similar environments. Given the Civic Centre will remain empty for a period of time, it make sense to allow the Police Force, Army and emergency services to make use of the site."

In late 2015, Council voted to vacate the Civic Centre building following the serving of two Improvement Notices by SafeWork NSW.

The Mayor added: "Any reuse would of course be subject to the approval from the relevant authorities and the removal of all items of value and historical significance."

The public car park and community use of the Civic Hall adjacent to the Civic Centre would not be affected.

In May 2016 staff were relocated to new offices in North Ryde and to the recently opened new Customer Service Centre at Top Ryde City shopping centre, (below Ryde Library at 1 Pope Street). A small number of Council and committee meetings are scheduled to take place in the building before the complete cessation of use of the building and removal of all items of value.

Uncertainty still surrounds the outcome of the proposed forced amalgamation of Ryde Council with neighbours Lane Cove and Hunters Hill. In the meantime, new Council and community meeting rooms are scheduled to be completed by September at the 1 Pope Street site.

In January 2016, Council launched an international design competition inviting submissions to reimagine the Civic Centre site from architects worldwide. *Design our Ryde* attracted 175 entries from 47 countries, including 42 from Australia. An expert jury is in the process of considering four shortlisted entries, including a People's Choice. The winner of *Design our Ryde* will be announced on Monday 8 August 2016.

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