



19 December 2024

The Hon. Paul Scully MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Dear Minister,

TG MILLNER FIELD, 146 VIMIERA ROAD, MARSFIELD

Background

We refer to our letter dated 2 December 2024 which summarised the political actions of Ryde Council in relation to our planning proposal for TG Millner Field over a number of years and, in particular, the actions of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown over the past six (6) months.

We did not expect to have to write to you again so soon but have been compelled to do so because of the financial position of our Clubs and our continued frustration at the continued vendetta by the Mayor to prevent our planning proposal from proceeding – irrespective of the financial consequences to our Clubs and the ratepayers of Ryde.

While we do not expect a response from your office given the time of year, we look forward to meeting with you in the New Year with a view to you providing direction regarding the next steps in terms of a NSW Government pathway to an objective assessment and timely decision in relation to our proposal.

Council Resolution – 10 December 2024

On 10 December 2024, the Liberal majority of Council adopted a ‘confidential’ Council Report from its CEO, to reallocate funds from Council’s ‘Ryde Central Reserve Fund’ and ‘Voluntary Planning Agreement Reserve Fund’ towards the compulsory acquisition of TG Millner Field.

This is the 5th time in the last 6 months that Mayor Brown has used Mayoral Minutes or last minute reports to seek to frustrate our planning proposal, notwithstanding multiple letters from you requesting that Council assess our planning proposal on its merits.

This resolution ignores a range of factors, the key one being that Council may have to pay \$85M for the site in a compulsory acquisition scenario - which it cannot afford - as identified by the Minister for Local Government in refusing Council’s compulsory acquisition request in April 2024.

Noting that Ryde Council reported itself to ICAC in May 2023 in relation to the improper transfer of funds between its Reserve Accounts, Council resolved last week to:

- Confidentially reallocate \$8.5M from the Ryde Central Reserve Fund (leaving a \$426K balance). This decision involves the reallocation of 95% of the Fund that relates to the most critical/visible Council project in the entire LGA, without any engagement with ratepayers.
- Reallocate \$11.5M from the Voluntary Planning Agreement Reserve Fund (leaving a \$3.5M balance). This is the Fund that holds contributions from developers that may be refundable if not expended within an agreed timeframe.



Council's resolution was based on a recommendation from its CEO that these VPA Reserve Funds be reallocated, notwithstanding that Council is still seeking legal advice to ascertain whether it can actually use these VPA funds for the acquisition of TG Millner Field.

Council has now largely returned to the point where it was on 13 October 2022 when it offered \$27.85M to acquire the site (it now states that it has \$35M available despite having now questionably reallocated funds from other priority areas to do so), while still being \$50M short of its potential compulsory acquisition exposure.

Some further points

In November 2023, Council considered a report from its then CFO regarding the financial position of Council, following a request by the Minister for Local Government that Council provide strategic justification and evidence of its financial capacity to acquire TG Millner Field.

Council's CFO (who has since left Council) made the following points:

- The financial implications of Council's VPAs have never been considered, or funded, prior to her November 2023 review.
- There is an ongoing annual VPA liability of \$5.8M to Council and Council will need to, as a priority, provide for this expenditure in its upcoming budgets as these VPAs are binding on Council.
- If this is not addressed (which it hasn't), Council will become financially unsustainable in the next financial year.

In response to this report, Council did not address any of the substantive points raised by Council's CFO, instead resolving to reduce its proposed financial contribution towards the compulsory acquisition of TG Millner Field to \$15M from the \$27.85M offered on 13 October 2022.

As outlined above, we look forward to meeting with you in the New Year with a view to our application being considered on its merits in a timely manner.

Yours faithfully,

Jim Morris
President
North Ryde RSL Community Club Ltd

Ian Williams
Company Secretary
Vimiera Recreation Grounds Limited

cc. The Hon Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government