



## VIMIERA RECREATION GROUNDS

25 October 2024

Mr Wayne Rylands  
Chief Executive Officer  
City of Ryde  
1 Pope Street  
RYDE NSW 2112

Dear Mr Rylands,

**TG MILLNER FIELD  
VRG + NORTH RYDE RSL CLUB PLANNING PROPOSAL  
PROPOSED RYDE COUNCIL PLANNING PROPOSAL TO REZONE TG MILLNER  
FIELD TO RE1 – PUBLIC RECREATION**

We refer to the following:

1. The decision of the Minister for Local Government on 4 April 2024 to reject Ryde Council's request to compulsorily acquire TG Millner Field on the basis that Council could not provide any strategic justification or funding to acquire the site.
2. Following this decision, the resubmission of our (identical) planning proposal to Council on 3 July 2024, which maintains our initial \$27M VPA offer (\$204K/dwelling) - which is more than 5 times higher than the most recent VPA entered into by Ryde Council (\$38K/dwelling) and double what has been achieved in similar projects across Sydney.
3. The adoption by Ryde Council on 27 August 2024, during the 'caretaker period' prior to the 14 September Council Elections, of a four (4) paragraph Mayoral Minute to 'develop and lodge' a planning proposal to rezone our privately-owned TG Millner Field to RE1 – Public Recreation.
4. Our letter dated 10 September 2024 to you stating that Council's 27 August 2024 resolution is an improper exercise of power by Council, requesting that this resolution be rescinded at the first Council meeting following the Council elections in that it seeks to:
  - (a) Circumvent the decision of the Minister for Local Government in April 2024 to refuse Council's application for consent to the issue of a proposed acquisition notice for the site under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*,
  - (b) Effectively block our planning proposal for the rezoning of the site prior to the proposal being assessed by Council staff on its merits against current State and Council strategic planning objectives, and
  - (c) Sterilise the development potential of our land (including the currently permissible seniors' housing) in circumstances where there is no reasonable pathway available for the Council to acquire the site for its market value.



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5. Advice subsequently provided by Council officers that:
  - (a) Council staff are aware of the Mayoral Minute and note that there is a lot of political interest in the planning proposal.
  - (b) Council staff have advised that Council cannot rezone the land to RE1 Public Recreation unless it is also identified for acquisition by Council.
  - (c) Council staff recognise that no funds are available to acquire the site and view our planning proposal as the next best option.
  - (d) Council staff recognise that seniors' housing is permitted on the site, notwithstanding the Mayor's comments on radio, and staff do not support this – preferring to work with us in relation to our planning proposal.
6. The Ethos Urban submission dated 17 September 2024 to Council regarding the future provision of open space within the Ryde LGA and Macquarie Park corridor - which demonstrates that Council can achieve all of its 2036 open space objectives for a fraction of the cost of acquiring TG Millner Field.
7. Our first meeting with nine (9) Council officers on 26 September 2024 – 85 days after our planning proposal was submitted to Council on 3 July 2024. We note that none of these officers were involved in the consideration of our initial planning proposal in March 2022 and that the key Council officer assessing our proposal has resigned since our meeting.
8. Council officers' email of 27 September 2024 following our meeting the previous day.
9. Detailed response from Ethos Urban dated 4 October 2024 to Council's email of 27 September 2024.
10. Various correspondence from Council officers promising the issue of a formal Request for Information (RFI) from Council in relation to our planning proposal by 30 September 2024, 18 October 2024 and now 25 October 2024 – delays which Council officers have advised are due to a requirement for you to sign-off on the RFI.
11. With no mention at all of Council's resolution of 27 August 2024, Council's adoption on Tuesday 22 October 2024 of another Mayoral Minute relating to TG Millner Field – that was not placed on the Agenda prior to the Council Meeting – that resolved that:
  - Council call on the Premier, Minister for Sport and Minister for Women to reallocate the reported \$16M negotiated by the Minns Labor Government to 'bring cage fighting to Sydney' towards the acquisition of TG Millner Field.
  - Council write to the Minister for Local Government recommending that he support this reallocation, and subsequently reverse his recent decision to block Council's application 'to make TG Millner public land'.



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### Our concerns

Referencing the various matters referred to above, we make the following points:

1. It is clear that Council's professional staff have strongly supported our planning proposals – both in 2022 and in 2024. This is despite the fact that there are entirely different officers considering the proposal in 2024 as opposed to 2022, with all of these officers being well aware of the political opposition at a Councillor level to our proposal.

Our May 2022 planning proposal was described by Council officers as 'the best planning proposal that they had ever seen'.

Our July 2024 planning proposal is also supported by Council officers who stated at our 26 September 2024 meeting that they will recommend to Council that our planning proposal has 'strategic merit' subject to the resolution of a specific issue regarding 'well-located homes' that we consider is readily resolvable.

2. Without any consideration of the views of Council's independent professional staff, the Liberal Mayors of Council have introduced multiple Mayoral Minutes (Jordan Lane in 2022 and Trenton Brown in 2023/2024) that have sought to prevent our planning proposal from proceeding.

Trenton Brown's Councillor profile has not changed on Council's website since he was first elected to Council in September 2017. His profile states that 'he is passionate about stopping overdevelopment in Ryde and preserving open recreational space such as the TG Millner Fields'.

Given his preconceived and longstanding opposition to any potential redevelopment of TG Millner Field, further evidenced by his lack of consideration to date of any independent Council officer advice regarding the proposal, Mayor Brown is seriously compromised in terms of his ability to perform his duties as a Mayor/Councillor in being able to objectively assess the merits or otherwise of our planning proposal.

3. We query how the 'cage fighting' Mayoral Minute that was passed by Council on 22 October 2024 sits with Council's 27 August 2024 resolution to pursue a planning proposal to rezone TG Millner Field to RE1 – Public Recreation and reserve the site for acquisition, particularly given the comments made above by Council officers regarding the fundamental failings of this proposed course of action by Council?

If the Mayor/Council have received advice from Council officers that the Council planning proposal proposed in the 27 August 2024 resolution is unable to be pursued, we request that we be advised of this fact as soon as possible.



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4. Our Clubs have expended millions of dollars over many years in seeking to keep TG Millner alive on behalf of our circa 30,000 members.

It is unacceptable that we are now in a position whereby the futures of our Clubs and the vast contribution that each has made to the Ryde community for 75+ years is placed in jeopardy due to the actions of a Mayor and Council who purport to seek to 'Save TG Millner Field' by financially devastating the very Clubs that have kept TG Millner Field alive for so many years.

Our letter to you dated 10 September 2024 set out our concerns regarding the 27 August 2024 Mayoral Minute, and the associated grave consequences for our Clubs, and we are yet to receive a response. This is an existential matter for our Clubs and we deserve a response from Council in relation to the points raised above as soon as possible.

Failing receipt of a response to the matters raised above by COB on Tuesday 29 October 2024, which also confirms that Council will not be proceeding with a planning proposal to rezone TG Millner Field to RE1 – Public Recreation, we intend to consider our position regarding the \$27M VPA offer which accompanies our planning proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Jim Morris  
President  
North Ryde RSL Community Club Ltd

Ian Williams  
Company Secretary  
Vimiera Recreation Grounds Limited