



**SUPPLEMENTARY  
BUSINESS PAPER**  
**(Mayoral Minute MM5/24)**  
**GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 12 June 2024  
at 6:30PM**



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## **15 WESTLEIGH PARK GRANT FUNDING**

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In what seems to be an inexplicable decision, the NSW Government has informed Hornsby Shire Council it will take back funding for the development of the much-needed recreational facilities at Westleigh Park. I am as disappointed as I am flabbergasted by this decision.

The government's decision to take back funds for this important community project is devastating to our residents who will be the ones who lose out.

Council was originally granted \$90 million from the previous state government to create much needed recreation destinations at Hornsby Park and Westleigh Park. This was part compensation for the loss of a large part of our southern territory to the City of Parramatta and the failure of the proposed amalgamation with Ku-ring-gai Council. Our community was promised it would be no worse off as a result of the failed amalgamation and independent analysis supported Council's view that its budget was impacted to the tune of ten million (net) dollars annually.

We accepted the grants and have been diligently working on delivering the much-needed facilities since then. Work has been underway on Westleigh Park for over five years, with millions of dollars already outlaid, contracts signed, and thousands of hours devoted to providing our residents with these vital facilities.

A Development Application for Westleigh Park was submitted in September 2023 and once development approval is achieved, we had planned to start construction in December.

Council has regularly updated the state government about progress and followed due diligence in meeting all its agreed milestones, so I am sure you share my outrage. I will not apologise that we have worked tirelessly on a sensitive and important site to get the balance right for our community. We pride ourselves on engagement with the community, especially on the challenging issues we have to face.

We have cooperated with the NSW Government on their recently announced housing targets, agreeing to deliver additional housing above the 4,900 already planned for in the Hornsby Town Centre Masterplan. To learn that these new residents will no longer have access to the infrastructure they were promised is incredibly disappointing. Indeed, along with the announcement of the NSW housing targets was a promise of money for supporting infrastructure, so to take back funding that was already given to us, and has been allocated, is ridiculous.

In my over 50 years of public service, I have never seen anything like this where a government promises a vitality needed resource to the community, only to take it away again.

The State Government does not have a great record of delivering infrastructure projects on time or within budget. If they are now going to seek to apply such rigid restrictions on Council expenditure and project delivery, I trust it will be apply a similar level of scrutiny and diligence to its own projects.

At this time, Council is reviewing its options with its legal team and will advise as we make further decisions.

I would encourage residents of Hornsby Shire to voice their disappointment about the government's broken promise to our community by writing to the Premier for New South Wales, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Planning and your local members, state and federal. Council's website has all the relevant details.

Rest assured Council is still committed to delivering this much-needed project. They are not fanciful dreams but what our community expects, deserves and needs. We won't be giving up any time soon.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council:

1. Formally expresses its disappointment.
2. Encourages the community to voice their disappointment about the government's broken promise to our community by writing to the Premier for New South Wales, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Planning and your local members, state and federal.
3. Seeks the support of NSROC and other councils in the region to ensure the funds to deliver this critically important infrastructure are retained and the project delivered.

The Honourable Cr PHILIP RUDDOCK

Mayor

#### **Attachments:**

There are no attachments for this report.

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