



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

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www.huntershilltrust.org.au

The City of Ryde
By email cityofryde@ryde.nsw.gov.au

26 September 2024

Dear Council

Re: Planning Proposal - 4 Pittwater Road, Gladesville

The Hunters Hill Trust does not support the reclassification of 4 Pittwater Road, Gladesville from Community to Operational Land. Our reasons for this are as follows:

- We note that the proposal under 3.3.1 indicates that it is the result of Hunter's Hill Council's Property Strategy (formerly the Community Infrastructure Plan). There is no Council endorsed Property Strategy. It appears to have been withdrawn because of significant community opposition. Council papers from July 2021 state that the Property Strategy was no longer being progressed. The proposal comes from a later report to Hunters Hill Council by the former (Acting) General Manager as a one-off reclassification of land.
- The land is currently being used for a valuable community service, Gladesville Occasional Care Service, which has been operating since 1983. The service is one of only three childcare services providing occasional care in Gladesville, open to parents who are not working or working a few shifts per week and only require sessional early childhood care and education.
- The service provides an affordable type of care as opposed to the services of "for profit" providers who dominate the early education and care industry in all areas of the state. This service provides care for less than \$100 per day in contrast to the other services that range from around \$160 - \$170 per day. As such it provides important social infrastructure for the Hunters Hill and Gladesville community that would not easily be replaced.
- Extensive research over decades has shown the value of early education and care in child development and school success as well as in workforce participation. The loss of this service would impact families, particularly low-income families and children in the decades to come.
- Hunters Hill Council has recognised the value of this service by awarding community grants to the service over each of the last four years. Yet it appears that it has not provided any assurances that the service would be relocated or promises of assistance to relocate. It has not consulted the service in any way.

- We note the importance of the location of this site in a hub with Gladesville Library which provides well attended sessions for pre-schoolers and encourages early literacy. Relocation would disrupt the important link between the Gladesville Occasional Care and the library, depriving particularly low-income families who access occasional care, of easy to access pathways to early literacy such as Ryde Council's "100 books" initiative.
- We note that the Acting General Manager of Hunters Hill Council at the time that the decision was made to seek reclassification of this site, stressed that it would not determine any change in its current use. This was supported by all Councillors at the time. Yet the proposal now envisages that the highest and best use would be residential and commercial outcomes. This is not consistent with maintaining a community based occasional care service, particularly as the site has restrictions which would impede significant proposals that incorporated space for occasional childcare.

The Hunters Hill Trust believes that Ryde Council should not support this proposal at Gateway Determination and instead support early childhood education and care through the continuation of Gladesville Occasional Care Service on its current site.

Kind regards



Karyn Raisin
President
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