

MM-2 MAYORAL MINUTE - CONCORD RSL SUB BRANCH

Department Executive

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

I wish to advise Council of the recent developments concerning the Concord RSL Sub Branch.

Councillors would be aware that the Club has faced trading difficulties for a number of years and that last year the NSW Branch of the Returned & Services Leagues of Australia (RSL) took control of Concord RSL Club and premises. This is very concerning to me.

As those who attended the recent Concord ANZAC Day services would know, the Concord district sub branch plays an extremely important role in our community both through the support for returned servicemen and women in our area and to the education of the broader public about their service and sacrifice.

The particulars of the dispute between the sub branch and RSL NSW have been well reported and I do not seek to offer commentary on those matters, however I do have significant concerns about the impact that the dissolution of this sub branch will have on our area and on our community.

RSL NSW president James Brown has been reported to have said his organisation was “carefully considering all options” for the club’s property. It is my strong belief that RSL NSW should not be taking further decision on this land and on the future of the club without thorough consultation with Council and with the community.

The land on which the RSL Club now stands was sold by Concord Golf Club to Council in 1955 under a covenant that stated the land was only to be used for “public recreation generally”. In 1963 the land was then sold on to the Concord District RSL Sub branch under a Covenant that stated the land was to only be used for an RSL Club and other associated recreational uses.

This land was always intended to be a place for locals to come together as a community. The Concord RSL Club has always fit that purpose.

Whilst I do acknowledge the good work that is done by RSL NSW, I have sincere reservations about the potential for this land, which was sold by Council to the Concord RSL sub branch under a clear covenant, to be sold off to boost RSL NSW’s coffers at the expense of our local community.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Mayor write to NSW Minister for Veterans, the RSL President, the Club Administrator and former Concord Sub Branch members seeking an immediate roundtable meeting to address these issues, facilitated by Council.
2. THAT the Mayor be authorised to take whatever action necessary in order to advocate for the ongoing operation of the Concord RSL Sub Branch and the protection of the Concord RSL land for public use.