

NEUTRAL PRECINCT MINUTES
Tuesday 9 May 2023, commenced at 7:00 pm

FURTHER AMENDMENTS BY COLES ON 30 MAY highlighted in yellow

Presentation + Q & A on Coles proposal for Grosvenor Street supermarket site and a plaza for Grosvenor Lane Carpark

GC welcomed Mr Tim Atkins Director Titanium Property, Coles development advisor, to the meeting and then provided a brief history on the development of the site:

- The site was included in the Military Road Corridor Planning Study Report approved by the former North Sydney Council in 2021 and rescinded by the new Council in January 2022.
- There is another developer, Arkadia, one of the landowners around the current Council carpark, who has indicated an interest in developing their land and a plaza on the Council carpark.
- On 26 April the Council gave permission for Coles to submit a DA for their land and a plaza on the Council carpark and indicated they would also consider granting similar permission for other developers.
- Council's permission to Coles to submit a DA is not an approval to a DA. The normal planning processes including consultation will take place.
- Council's permission is required, by regulation, to lodge a DA because they are the owner of the car park.
- Neutral Precinct would welcome presentations of similar development proposals for this area.

TA provided Post-It notes and pens for attendees to note questions during the presentation and place on provided butchers paper for Coles will take away and to provide feedback to the Precinct.

TA then introduced the Coles development project team:

Mr Richard Hamilton Titanium Property
Mr Howard Hawthorn - State Development Manager NSW/ACT Coles Property
Mr James Vlismas SJB Architects
Mr Matthew Durning Aspect Studios – Landscape and Public Realm

TA and the team presented and spoke to a number of slides illustrating and describing the proposal concepts, progress to date, ongoing collaboration, the design progress and next steps. The following points were made:

Introduction:

- Coles primary purpose is to provide a world class supermarket that people like coming to and to other surrounding businesses e.g. those around the current carpark
- To deliver a landmark store that has sustainability elements
- A map of land ownership for the area was shown

Background:

- Coles bought the site approximately 10 years ago.
- Coles developed a master plan with other landowners in 2020/2021 and presented the Joint Masterplan to Council in December 2021.
- Following Council's rescission of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study and because of the imminent expiry of the Woolworth's lease at the end of 2024 Coles reviewed their options to rebadge the existing store or develop including the Council carpark
- Coles made a presentation to the Councillors in June 2022 outlining that it wanted to submit a development application that included the Council car park rather than wait for the revision to the Future Directions Report due to the impending Woolworths expiry.
- Coles then developed its own plan in 2022 and an indicative concept plan for the area including the Council car park and presented the concept in a pre DA meeting with Council officers in December 2022.
- Following the pre DA meeting Coles decided to move ahead of any future planning study of the area and submit a development Application largely in accordance with the current planning controls.
- Coles outlined in brief the current planning requirements (North Sydney LEP) including vehicular access, Pedestrian access, height, setbacks and active frontage requirements.

Coles outlined the challenge with the site contours with a drop of 7 metres from Military Road to Grosvenor Street/Coopers Lane corner which makes creating a level Plaza a challenge.

Consultation

- Council has facilitated a process for Coles to consult and then to lodge a DA including a Voluntary Planning Agreement which will be required to put on exhibition before any decision on the form of the development is made by Council.
- So far, input has been received from the Chamber of Commerce and the Neutral Bay and Cremorne Progress Association. The Association's submission has been a valuable informer as to current community expectations and has been influential in effecting some of the decisions and features of the current plans.
- Council has commenced a public realm study for the proposed plaza and the Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study in 2023

Plaza design concepts

- Aspect Design has researched public places around the world including New York, Darling Square NSW, Houston, Piazza San Marco Venice, Canopy Project, Lane Cove; Fish Lane Brisbane looking at the following key elements:
 - Movement and integration
 - Greening the neighbourhood
 - Flexibility and function
 - Articulation and enterprise
 - Re-establishing the tree canopy
 - Places for people

- 3 concepts have been developed to create a Plaza in the Council carpark:
 - i. A shared vehicle lane on the northern side with some at grade parking and landscape on the southern side
 - ii. A ring road around the area with some at grade parking and landscaped area in the centre
 - iii. A shared lane with some at grade parking at the southern end with access from Waters Lane, and landscape towards the northern end.

Car parking:

The current vision is for 3 basement parking levels:

- P1
 - Under the Coles site extending under the proposed Plaza to approximately 8m from the footpath outside businesses on the southern side
 - A loading dock entrance from Grosvenor Street, comprising a lift to take trucks to Basement 3. This avoids using ramps which take up too much space.
 - Approx. 115 - 120 car spaces
 - Provides a car connection to future development by other on the other side of the site along Military Road
 - An entry to the carpark from Grosvenor Street in a similar location to the current arrangement
 - Currently working with the traffic engineer to get the best possible circulation of vehicles
 - Travellators into the plaza between the Coles (southern end) and the Plaza at the south/east area of the plaza
 - A Coles 'Click and Collect' area at the entrance to the car park.
- P2
 - Approx. 130 car spaces. Same footprint as P1.
- P3
 - Approx. 70-80 spaces for residential parking depending on the mix of apartment numbers.

The building

- The current LEP requires a 1.5m setback on both Coopers Lane and Waters Lane. The proposal is to move both setback requirements to Waters Lane to improve the pedestrian thoroughfare and build to the boundary on Coopers Lane as per the existing building.
- A U shaped design of six storeys on top of the supermarket is currently proposed.
- Setbacks at different levels designed to reduce the bulk and provide improved solar access into the plaza particularly on the North side of the plaza.
- It is a complicated site in regard to levels and the aim is to establish the best possible connection to the Plaza and to other businesses.

Questions and Answers

Q: Is the proposal a complete rebuild?

A: Yes, if we redevelop the site it will be a complete rebuild. The current proposal will exceed the existing building height controls but pushing the building back in Waters Lane and towards Grosvenor Street to obtain the additional sunlight on the plaza.

Q: Will the current carpark be preserved while the build takes place?

A: Coles recognise that it will need to stage the build to provide car spaces to maintain the small businesses and enable them to operate. Coles wants the small businesses to survive the redevelopment.

Q: Do we get a net gain in carparking spaces?

A: A total of approximately 60-70 additional car spaces are planned, there may be a number of additional cars (to be determined) on the Plaza and the rest in the proposed basements.

Q: Will the store be larger?

A: It will be a similar size to the existing. The footprint at ground floor is smaller. The support areas for Coles are being pushed underground into P3.

Q: I don't go to Coles because of the current product range. Will you be increasing the product range in the new store?

A: Coles primary purpose is to provide a world class supermarket that people like coming to. The exact content of the store will be determined at a later date. Coles will be delivering a state of the art store.

Q: Who will maintain the Plaza?

A: North Sydney Council will retain ownership of the plaza and usually it is the landowners responsibility to maintain their land. However, this is subject to discussion with Council.

Q: Will traffic infringement on the plaza be by the Council?

A: We assume that it will be as now

Q: What is the timeframe between closure of the existing supermarket and opening the new one?

A: Approx. 2 years. The Coles at the big bear will remain in operation during this time and will be continuing to trade after the new supermarket opens

Q: What is the proposed height of the building on Grosvenor Street?

A: This has not been determined as yet. There will be setback of 3 metres at the podium height and a further set back at the top level to reduce the impact of the height at ground level. Taking the bulk out of the centre of the building would allow greatly improved solar access to the Plaza.

Q: What is the difference between current solar access into the carpark compared with the bulk and form of the proposed building?

A: The modelling that we provided for you earlier was done on the shortest day of the year. We have not done any modelling at other times. We are designing the building and the plaza for sun in the winter and shade in the summer

The proposal exceeds the existing building height controls but pushing the building back on Waters Lane and towards Grosvenor Street is being proposed to obtain the additional sunlight in the plaza throughout the year.

Q: What is the use of the garden in the atrium?

A: It is designed for the use of apartment residents only. It will have trees planted which will improve the visual aspect of the building viewed from the Plaza.

Q: What is happening at ground level in Grosvenor Street frontage?

A: The car park and loading dock entries are proposed along Grosvenor Street. It is proposed that there will be retail activation at the corners of waters lane and Grosvenor Street.

Q: What is happening on Coopers Lane?

A: We are proposing to build to the boundary and it will contain mostly services the residential car park entry and a Vintage Cellars. There are many technical issues yet to be addressed on this side of the building.

Q: What about the local stores. How do we access them during construction of the building? Will there be parking for customers during the build?

A: We are working through a number of scenarios. We know we have to keep car parking available in the town centre to sustain the retailers. The building of the car park on the plaza will be a staged process. There will be some disruption, however, we will be working hard to ensure that this is minimised.

Q: If you don't get approval for the proposal will you just renovate the existing store?

A: We have two options to refurbish the existing store largely as is or to propose a building generally within the existing planning controls. If the DA is not approved then Coles will make its decision at that point.

Q: We are encouraged you are seeking to work within the planning controls

A: The proposal will be exceeding the current planning allowed height but looking for it to be allowed in a Voluntary Planning Agreement. The current proposal is above the 16metre limit. The Pienza Apartments next door off Waters Lane have 24 metres and we are trying to work with the proposed height of the Pienza development.

The final height to be proposed is part of the negotiation we will be having with Council. Coles plan to set back the building from the requirements under the LEP to improve the sunlight access plane and allow more sunlight to the plaza in exchange for increased building height on the Grosvenor Street elevation.

Q Were these plans developed before the Pienza development?

A No. The Pienza development has gained its approval for the extra height prior to the current plans being developed by Coles..

Coles is proposing additional height based on the shifting of the bulk of the building to the North to improve the sunlight on the proposed plaza. We have talked to the Pienza team but not yet given them details of what we are proposing.

Q There will be no possible trade for the small businesses during the building construction

A It will be possible for the retailers to trade as the construction is set back approximately 8m from the curb on the southern side of the car park, the retailers will be affected as it is proposed to close the supermarket to build a new one and there will be interruption to the car park. We hope the community will continue to shop there and support the local retailers.. There will be a significant benefit to the businesses following the development with additional public car parking and the amenity of the new plaza along with a state of the art Coles supermarket.

GC (Precinct) added: The landowner Arkadia at the southern end of the carpark want to propose development of their site and a plaza. They are currently trying to work out how they can support their tenants. There is a competitive process here and the community should benefit in the end.

Q Who is the developer?

A We, Titanium Property Investment, are a consultant to Coles we are not the developer. Coles is the owner and developer of the site and have engaged Titanium Property Investment as their advisor. Coles has not decided on who they will engage to deliver the development.

Q If you don't go ahead with the proposal and just rebadge how long will the store be closed?

A At this stage our best estimate is approx. 6-9 months

Q All the plans have Grosvenor Lane through them. Is this what you want to create?

A The Coles proposals are for a shared zone. Similar, for example, to the Canopy in Lane Cove allowing for pickups and drop offs and to allow the area to work efficiently for both the retailers and the public. . Pedestrians would be prioritised in the plaza.

Q What are the implications for the plaza if you choose to just refurbish?

A The plaza won't be developed by Coles. We won't have any incentive to warrant a contribution to a plaza. The loading dock for Coles will stay where it is currently located in the car park.

Q Is there an option for a supermarket and five levels of residences?

A It will ultimately depend on the planning panel decision.

Q Can you go deeper and not impact the plaza?

A If we are limited to excavating the Coles site there would be approximately 77 car spaces per basement level. We would need to go too deep to accommodate the required amount of car parks to satisfy Coles and the residents. . Extending the car park under the plaza provides a more efficient car park layout and traffic management model for the area. Using approximately 60% of the car park area for excavation is needed to make the car parking proposal work efficiently and provides continuous access for the existing retailers.

Q Is this really about making the supermarket viable by increasing the number of car parking spaces? How do you tie in the car spaces for the residential apartments?

A A concern for Coles is if the plaza is developed without additional car parking being provided. This would reduce the carparking provided for both Coles and the existing retailers. The Coles proposal increases the number of public car parks in the vicinity to approximately 250 cars and provides some certainty for Coles and the retailers for the future as well as the plaza that has been the subject of discussions for a long time. This is a win win proposal

Q What is the residential component?

A Based on the current concept there are around 75 apartments equating to probably 70-80 car spaces. The Development Control Plan requires car spaces to be determined based on the number of bedrooms and mix of apartments in the development.

Q Will you get rid of the Young Street plaza.

A GC (Precinct) answered. The Interim plaza was installed by the previous Council. The State Government approved the closure of the road and has given the council approx. \$2m from the BLine funding. The new Council has said it will open Young Street again. The community can contribute to this issue through the new Neutral Bay Town Centre planning Study consultations.

Mr Atkins indicated that Coles would be happy to attend a future meeting to discuss the development application.

GC thanked Mr Atkins and the team for attending.

The session ended at 8:55pm. An intermission was called and 23 of the 38 people present left the meeting.

MEETING

1. Apologies – nil

2. Business from minutes of meeting held on 14 February 2023:

- i. Following review, the minutes were moved as correct by EC and seconded by TM.
- ii. Council feedback to Precinct issues

Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning - Council repealed the initial study because it would have changed the building height and scale of the Neutral Bay Village and has commenced round 2 of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study. Council has undertaken to institute a more considered study of the town centre that does not include huge height increases but responds to the huge development pressure in Neutral Bay and Cremorne, and moves away from using terminology like “corridor”. Consultation has commenced with a ‘Pop Up’ community awareness information session in the Grosvenor Street Car Park and will continue with more detailed consultation. The Neutral Bay and Cremorne Progress Association (NBCPA) has asked Council to set up a community advisory group to the Planning Study similar to ‘Lane Cove Alive’ group which informed the Lane Cove Canopy project. As a result of discussions between the Mayor and Council’s Director of City Strategy, a Mayoral motion will be put to the next meeting of Council to allow this to happen.

Council’s Manager Strategic Planning has advised that Council staff are in the process of finalising Terms of Reference for the community advisory group and will soon be seeking expressions of interest for membership. Further information will be provided to all Precinct Committees in due course and will be publicly available at <https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/nbtcps>

Planning Proposal for Woolworths Rangers Road impact on the community - Council has taken a strong position in line with community expectations and refused the first planning proposal. Council staff are now looking at the second proposal. The challenge is to provide sufficient public benefit and have a development that does not swamp the local roads and keeps the height down. The site is impacted by traffic from a number of nearby schools and an increase of residents in the area in the last five years. Another challenge is that Council is also being required, by the State Government, meet higher and higher residential density targets.

Council’s Team Leader - Policy has advised that a detailed assessment report was presented to the North Sydney Local Planning Panel meeting of 19 April 2023. This report and recommendations of the Panel can be viewed at the link below. The assessment report contains commentary on the scale, height and massing of the proposal as well

as qualitative commentary on the proposed public benefit offering put forward by the applicant.

<https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/north-sydney-local-planning-panel-nslpp>

The Planning Proposal and advice of the North Sydney Local Planning Panel will now be presented to Council's next scheduled meeting of 22 May 2023 for consideration. The agenda for this meeting will be available on Council's website from 12 May 2023.

Merger of Neutral, Hayes & Kurraba Precincts -

Council's Manager Corporate Planning & Engagement has advised that the proposed merger of the three Precinct areas is noted, and that whilst (per the Council resolution of 25 July 2022) "mergers or amalgamations between Precincts or their dissolution are matters for the Precinct Committees themselves to determine, and that Council will provide administrative support for any such mergers, amalgamations or dissolutions", that consultation with the inactive Precinct areas to gauge community interest/ support for the proposed change is encouraged (min. 42 days). Council will coordinate a flyer to be printed and distributed within the three Precinct areas, calling for community feedback to determine the level of support for the merger. Council will work with the office bearers of Neutral Precinct Committee to finalise the flyer content/next steps.

UPDATE (2 May 2023)

Council's Manager Corporate Planning & Engagement has advised that Brightmore and Harrison/Bennett Precinct Committees have proposed Precinct area boundary changes that affect the current Neutral Precinct area. Neutral Precinct Committee is encouraged to discuss the proposal amongst its members e.g. flag under General Business at your May 2023 meeting and list a proposed motion on your June 2023 agenda to provide Council with a formal record of Neutral Precinct's view on the matter. As advised in an email to the office bearers of the three Precinct Committees, the below next steps are proposed - to help ensure consultation has occurred and coordinate the admin changes:

1. Proposal listed on next Precinct meeting agenda for discussion - Council informed of final proposal via motion within minute (post consultation with Precinct area)
2. Staff to prepare map/s showing proposed maps (to aid consultation)
3. Consultation to occur with affected streets directly impacted by the proposal e.g. via direct notification letter
4. Councillor Bulletin item prepared to advise of proposal (for information)
5. Council report to advise of the Council change

6. *Precinct area map/s updated on website and Council's record keeping system etc.*
7. *New boundaries apply*

3. There were no additional items added to the Agenda

4. Planning Proposals Update:

i. PP 1/23: 1-7 Rangers Road (Woolworths)

GC provided background:

The North Sydney Planning Panel has released its advice to Council: the Panel does not support the Woolworths Planning Proposal proceeding in its current form. It says if a Planning Proposal is to progress, it should address:

- reducing the proposed overall height to 21 metres to Yeo Street and 28 metres to Rangers Road (down from Woolworths proposed 27 metres to Yeo Street and 33 metres to Rangers Road),
- reducing the bulk, scale and massing of the development
- providing an open-to-sky through site link,
- providing a public plaza that is more generously and appropriately proportioned to enable a genuine community space,
- enabling connectivity with the adjoining 183-185 Military Road site and Military Lane,
- removing the public parking of 88 spaces.

The Panel calls for a site specific Development Control Plan and suggests Woolworths be given the opportunity to have further dialogue with the Council.

Discussion Points:

- Noted the Council rejected the original planning proposal
- Solar access to Yeo Street residences is still impacted by the building height. Can Woolworths change the design to include greater setbacks?
- The latest proposal still has a fair amount of bulk

MOTION: Neutral Precinct notes the North Sydney Planning Panel rejection of the latest Planning Proposal and their advice for a suggested building height which will allow for adequate solar access to Yeo Street.

VOTE: Unanimous (15)

ii. PP 4/23: 183-185 Military Road Neutral Bay (next to Woolworths)

GC outline the proposal:

Equitibuild Group has lodged a Planning Proposal to rezone the land on the corner of Military Road and Rangers Road and increase the maximum building height to 43 metres enabling a 12 storey development with:

- an underground grocer (like 12-14 Waters Road),

- a first floor community facility, two office levels, eight storeys containing around 44 apartments,
- 57 car spaces (but only 21 spaces for the five levels of retail, office and community uses).
- A tower to the north of the Woolworths site is proposed together with a plaza and an open-to-sky link from the plaza to Yeo Street

Discussion Points:

- While the rescinded Military Road Corridor Planning Study allowed a 12 storey building on this site, the community rejected the proposal and the new council is unlikely to agree as the proposal is well outside the current LEP.
- Neutral Precinct has consistently objected to planning proposals of 12 storeys which are not in keeping with the village character.
- The proposed plaza will wrap around to Military Road letting in the noise from the road to the area.

MOTION: Neutral Precinct objects to the 12 storeys in the planning proposal for 183 – 185 Military Road. Additionally, the proposal offers inadequate community benefit for the proposed height above the current LEP. The proposal should be considered within the current LEP or wait for the report of the new Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study.

5. Transfer of 139-173 Military Road / 152-156 Wycombe Road), currently in Brightmore Precinct, to Neutral Precinct (i.e. the block bounded by Military Road to the north, May Lane to the south, May Gibbs Place to the west and Wycombe Road to the east.)

MOTION: Neutral Precinct agrees to the realignment of the boundary with Brightmore Precinct

Vote: Unanimous (15)

6. Development Applications
 - i. DA 101/2023: Military Road Neutral Bay. Installation and operation of a freestanding advertisement structure for the purpose of Council communication and third-party advertising at Military Road Neutral Bay.

Discussion points:

- Is this revenue raising for the Council?
- More visual pollution
- Does Council have a policy regarding commercial signage?
- It would be a further visual distraction to drivers in that area
- There is value to pedestrians to have Council communication provided through signage in the shopping precinct.

MOTION: Neutral Precinct does not support the proposal as it will be more visual pollution and a distraction to drivers at the proposed location.

VOTE: Unanimous (15)

- ii. DA 120/2023: 31 Darley Street Neutral Bay. Alterations and additions to a dwelling including replacement of balcony, landscaping and extension of a glass balustrade. Noted. No affected resident attended the meeting.
7. Letter from the Mayor - North Sydney Olympic Pool re-development
 - EC Read out the letter from the Mayor regarding development of the North Sydney Pool.
 - The Precinct Committee will review the Council's operational budget and report back to precinct members the projects Council plans to be defer in order to meet the Pool cost overrun.
 - A copy of the letter is at attachment A to the minutes.
 8. Council community consultations www.yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

The following consultations were noted and residents encouraged to complete the surveys.

- i. Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning: Community Centre survey - closes 17 May
 - ii. Car Share Application Premier Street - feedback closes 14 May
 - iii. Electric Vehicle Survey and Charging Location Map - feedback closes 15 May
 - iv. 2023 Liveability Census - survey closes 30 June
9. Upcoming meetings noted
 - i. Neutral Precinct – 13 June www.neutralprecinct.com
 - ii. Council – 22 May, 5 June www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

Meeting closed at 9:46pm

ATTACHMENT A

An open letter to the North Sydney community from Mayor Zoë Baker

As a long-term councillor and now Mayor of North Sydney, I am committed to integrity and transparency in local government. I believe the best results are achieved when communities are consulted and councils work openly with residents and ratepayers to determine their future.

Last year, when it was clear that the redevelopment of the North Sydney Olympic Pool was running over time and over budget, I called for an independent review of the project and promised that I would keep you informed of the outcome.

This Council (elected December 2021) inherited the North Sydney Olympic Pool redevelopment project in the design, form, governance structure and financing model established and adopted by the former Council. The purpose of the independent review was not to revisit the scope or direction of the project, but to understand the causes for the time and cost over-runs so that we could take measures to put the project back on track and keep it there.

The review was conducted by respected consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC).

Some of the delays and costs can be attributed to external factors such as La Nina and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, taking into consideration the findings of the PWC report, it is clear that better project planning and governance in the pre-construction phase would have created a stronger foundation for this project and importantly, anticipated some of the risks that have now been realised.

In all PWC identified 16 findings and made 33 recommendations. These are discussed in a report to Council for its meeting on 26 April. You can find a copy of the report on Council's website (create link to report).

I will highlight some of the issues identified in the recent review so that you can understand the decisions this Council is now facing.

There is no doubt that works were required to the North Sydney Olympic Pool, with the facility having reached the end of its useful life. The key decision for the last term of Council was the scale of those works. Given the high levels of funding and prioritisation required, this decision should have been made in full consultation with the community.

Consultation was undertaken in the early stages of the project planning, resulting in a decision to adopt what was called Option 2, an upgrade of the existing centre. However, as identified by PWC, the previous Council's decision to increase the scope of works from Option 2, a \$28 million project to Option 2b, a \$63.9 million project did not fully align with the feedback from community consultation. Rather than undertake additional consultation, Council relied on the standard formal exhibition requirements of the Development Application.

Governance is critical to a project of this size, yet the PWC review found the Steering Committee established by the previous Council did not include an experienced technical expert. The business case prepared did not include all the information necessary to assess the viability of the project over its whole life. The business model for the facility wasn't decided prior to construction. In addition, the risk assessment did not identify some risks and some of the mitigation strategies that had been identified were not implemented.

Upon approval of the Development Application, the Council moved ahead with construction tenders and negotiations of contracts at pace. The review findings noting the expedited nature of negotiations substantially increased Council's risk exposure. The time allowed for each stage of the planning phase was simply not sufficient. The construction contract was signed on 31 December 2020 although finished designs were not available until February 2021.

Taking into consideration all the findings of the PWC review, it was clear the budget for the project was not sufficient in the first place, considering the risks that had been accepted.

PWC noted that a primary driver of decisions during the planning phase was the desire to control the project budget. This resulted in decisions creating false economies such as removing the external project managers, deciding to proceed with separate design and construct contracts, and not allowing a contingency that took into consideration the risks relevant to the project. Costs such as the fit out of the gym and creche, required repairs to the Aqua Dining building and eastern stair tower were not included in the project, nor was sufficient funding for internal project management costs and consultancy.

Despite concerns regarding the decision to undertake in house project management, PWC did not recommend contracting out project management at this stage. PWC expressed a confidence in the current project team's significant knowledge and skill regarding the project, best placing them to finalise the work with the added support of the new Steering Committee.

This Council has accepted all the findings and is implementing all PWC recommendations.

This Council has established a new Steering Committee including an independent advisor. APP Corporation Pty Ltd represented by Ron Aquilina was appointed as the Independent Advisor to the Steering Committee in February 2023. Mr Aquilina is well respected in the project management industry and his advice has been invaluable to date.

A programmer has also been engaged to support the project team and provide expertise in assessing any future claims for extension of time.

A more comprehensive business case will be undertaken by Council's newly appointed pool manager who has experience bringing pools online. The new manager will prepare a demand analysis and budget estimates to ensure the pool will be financially sustainable when it opens.

To address concerns in relation to risk management of the project, Council has undertaken a risk workshop and the risk register is now a living document that is reviewed regularly and implemented.

Current estimates suggest an additional \$25 million to \$30 million will be required to complete the redevelopment project and ensure the facility is ready to open.

The completion date, originally estimated to be November 2022, is now expected to be April 2024. I know the delayed completion date is incredibly disappointing and frustrating for regular swimmers and parents seeking a learn to swim class.

At the Council meeting to be held on 26 April 2023, Council will consider a staff recommendation to fund the additional cost through a significant reduction in capital works budgets for the 2023/24 year and a depletion of the capital works reserve, a reserve which provides for future works.

Combined these measures provide \$24.2 million towards the pool project budget, with the remaining funding recommended to be sourced as estimates are firmed.

These staff recommendations require Council to make difficult decisions, however, I can assure you that Council's finances are sound, and the additional cost can be managed without reducing service levels.

I have visited the site twice this year and can see the steady progress that had been made between my visits. The Council team is working closely with the contractors and will do everything possible to keep to the revised schedule.

Whilst Council is in a position to manage the cost overrun, this Council understands that it comes at an opportunity and social cost to residents and ratepayers who will not get upgrades to other facilities they regularly use. When Council's operational plan and budget for the 2023/24 financial year go on public exhibition in May, I encourage you take a look at the projects proposed to be deferred and take the time to share your views.

This Council cannot change the past or alter previous decisions. This Council is taking responsibility for the project and is committed to sustainably managing the financial burden and delivering an exceptional experience for pool users.

Please be patient a little longer - the pool you know and love will be back next year to serve our community for the next 80 years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Barber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.