

ANNOUNCEMENT: 6 September 2024

A joint statement by Merri Southwood (Independent, East Ward), Bridget Kennedy (Independent, Central Ward), Kathy Bryla (Independent, Central Ward), and Rochelle Flood (The Greens, West Ward)

Local kids deserve access to high-quality sporting facilities and our community deserves recreational spaces that fit their needs, which is why we support the finalisation of the Lane Cove Sport and Recreation Facility.

Did you know that when it's finished, the Lane Cove Sport and Recreation Centre will have world-class Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) features?

Those design features will make the building more energy-efficient and resilient. But they weren't in the original Development Application.

It only happened via the advocacy of Councillor Merri Southwood, Councillor Bridget Kennedy, Councillor Kathy Bryla and Councillor Rochelle Flood.

Fact check: Correction on some Councilors being 'for' or 'against' the facility

When you see statements from fellow Council candidates saying that if you vote against a complex project like the Lane Cove Sport and Recreation Centre, that you don't support it, it's a gross oversimplification and just not true.

We have delivered significant improvements to this project as a result of our robust advocacy, and our continued work to champion the voices of the local community.

By asking tough questions, and pushing for improvements to this project, the four of us helped to ensure:

- The protection of the remnant Turpentine-Ironbark forest on Stevenson Street. A huge win for our community and our natural environment.
- The protection of our tree canopy by ensuring any trees removed are replaced with two new ones.
- The saving of considerable rate-payer funds – as the new design no longer required the acquisition of a multi-million-dollar house, or the building of a steep access road and roundabout.
- The delivery of an all-electric building (no gas and including a 200kw solar system)

- A selection of LED light fittings that comply with 'dark sky principles' to minimise impact to the surrounding environment and fauna
- The delivery of full energy-efficient fittings and equipment.
- A project designed with great acoustic comfort and lots of double glazing.
- The use of vital water-saving features.
- Enhanced local biodiversity with native plants.
- Reusable formwork to cut down on waste.
- The use of Low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) finishes to keep the air inside clean.

All of this was only possible because we took a stand and continued to push for improvements.

We have also consistently pushed for transparent reporting to the community, so that council remains accountable for the delivery of this project, and that the community remains fully aware of the project costs and timeline.

So, next time you hear someone claim that we opposed this project, remember the improvements that were gained as a result of our robust questions and debate.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say:

If you vote against a motion... you will help push for significant sustainability upgrades to ensure this once-in-a-generation project is fit for the future and is in line with environmental best practices.

If you vote against a motion... you will preserve remnant critically endangered turpentine-Ironbark forest from being destroyed. Saving critical habitat and preserving our local tree canopy.

If you vote against a motion... you help push council to publish more information so residents are not kept in the dark about a major capital works program, costing ratepayers tens of millions of dollars. Your questions ensure all information is to hand to make a good decision for the community.

When it comes to a huge project like this, many motions along the way help bring it to fruition. Like most things at Council, nothing is black and white. There's often a series of complex decisions and factors to be weighed up.

In this case, voting against something does not mean you oppose the project entirely; it means you want to make it something even better.

Ultimately, the objective of a Councillor as an elected representative is to be the nexus between council staff and the community. That involves having the backbone to ask tough questions to achieve better long-term outcomes for that community.

Councillors Merri Southwood, Councillor Bridget Kennedy, Councillor Kathy Bryla and Councillor Rochelle Flood stand by our voting record. We have nothing to hide. We are proud of the ultimate outcome and will continue working to ensure our community has a world-class facility.

Signed:

Kathy Bryla, Independent.

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