

## **Mayoral Minute: Renovating Leichhardt Oval & Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre**

### **Background**

#### **Saving Leichhardt Oval**

It's crunch time in the long struggle to save Leichhardt Oval.

Since Council adopted the Leichhardt Oval Masterplan last December there has been much speculation about funding that could be made available to renovate the ground but as yet no investment has been allocated.

Council has invested more than \$7.2 million over recent years to maintain and improve the ground but without a major upgrade in the immediate future Leichhardt Oval will become unsafe for use as a sporting facility that hosts large crowds.

It is time for Inner West Council to commit to the funding that we can provide to save Leichhardt Oval and implement our Masterplan.

#### **Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre**

Council is also well advanced in planning for the renovation of Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC). The main Olympic pool, having been built in the 1960's, has reached the end of its lifecycle.

There is \$40 million allocated in the draft budget over the next 3 years to renovate LPAC. This includes the following upgrades:

- construction of new heated 8-lane 50 meter pool
- refurbishment of the outdoor children's pool
- a new 25 meter pool with a moveable floor, spectator seating and shade structures
- a new BBQ and picnic area, and outdoor water playground
- energy efficient heating and filtration systems throughout the facility

With final design of the renovation yet to be completed there is time for the LPAC plans to be strengthened to maximise the utility of the Aquatic Centre to support sporting users of a renovated Leichhardt Oval.

This could include the provision of swimming, rehabilitation, and gymnasium facilities for use by sporting clubs that are training and playing at Leichhardt Oval.

#### **Funding for the Leichhardt Park Sport and Recreation Precinct**

The Chief Financial Officer advises that due to Council's strong financial position Inner West Council is able to allocate \$10 million for the upgrade Leichhardt Oval to be funded from existing reserves.

Council has also allocated \$40 million in our draft Budget, over the next three years, to the upgrade Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre.

The combination of these two major projects would see a \$50 million funding commitment from Inner West Council for the Leichhardt Park Sport and Recreation precinct.

### **Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Amend the 2024/25 budget, to be adopted at the June 2024 Council meeting, to incorporate \$50 million in funding for the upgrades of Leichhardt Oval and Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre and to support the Leichhardt Park Sport and Recreation Precinct. \$10 million of this funding is to be dedicated to the implementation of the Leichhardt Oval Masterplan.