

**ITEM                    MAYORAL MINUTE: SIBBICK STREET RESERVE**

**Department        Executive Services**

**Author Initials: AT**

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**REPORT**

I would like to bring to Council's attention a promising opportunity to secure the future of a beloved local park in Russell Lea.

The City of Canada Bay has maintained and undertaken substantial capital improvements to Sibbick Street Reserve since Drummoyne Council entered into a lease with the Federal Government in 1975. Since that year Council has been paying the sum of 10 cents a year for the land.

In the past 10 years alone Council has invested over \$120,000 into the local park. This includes the design and construction of an award winning playground that was opened in 2017 for the benefit of young families local to the area.

Through their rate payments, our residents and local businesses have been investing in this great green space that has become a lively hub for the area. On any given afternoon over summer the basketball half-court is full of budding young players and the playground is a huge hit with our youngest residents.

And indeed it is an important park for the local area. Home to the only public park and dedicated children's playground in Russell Lea, Sibbick Street Reserve is of significant importance to the local community.

Without Sibbick Street Reserve, approximately one third of Russell Lea would not be within 400 metres easy walking distance of public open space, a standard set by The Government Architect NSW.

Council was notified in June of 2019 that the Commonwealth Department of Finance was seeking to resolve the future of the land ahead of the current 50-year lease finishing in 2025. In their letter to Council, the Department stated that there is a 'low likelihood of a Commonwealth use requirement for this site going forward' and that 'the land is potentially surplus'.

This park is certainly not surplus to the requirements of our community, quite the opposite, so in July 2019, Council made a reasonable request to the Department that the land be transferred to the City of Canada Bay for a small nominal figure so that Council can maintain the park's ongoing stewardship for the benefit of the local community.

Following a meeting earlier this year, I am pleased to report local Member for Reid Fiona Martin MP has supported Council's request that the Department of Finance secure the future of this land by dedicating it to the City of Canada Bay.

We welcome this support from the Member for Reid for our local community and we now seek the Minister's support to ensure this vital open green space is secured for our community.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. THAT Council write to Member for Reid Fiona Martin MP thanking her for supporting the retention of Sibbick Street Reserve as a local park.
2. THAT Council write to Minister for Finance Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann requesting support for the retention of Sibbick Street Reserve as a public asset by its transfer or dedication to Council.

