

TRRRA

Tamworth Regional
Residents and
Ratepayers
Association, Inc.

P O Box 1953
Tamworth NSW 2340
w: trrra.org.au
e: trrra@outlook.com.au

12 April 2024

The Editor
Northern Daily Leader
27 Bourke Street
Tamworth NSW 2340
Via email: Mail.ndl@fairfaxmedia.com.au

Dear Editor

Proposed Sale of Council Car Park Kable Avenue and Ray Walsh House

The TRRRA is a non-profit association whose charter is to represent to Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) and other government bodies on behalf of TRC residents on matters that affect their interests by any person, organisation or government body.

The below comments are made as a matter of public interest to assist Tamworth Regional Council in its decision making.

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) has advised that it will defer a decision about the future of Ray Walsh House (RWH) until after Council elections in December 2024.

TRRRA has established a Facebook page with the intention of providing the Tamworth regional residents access to information about Ray Walsh House and its significance to the recent history of Tamworth.

TRC has some 600 employees, where the bulk of the indoor staff could be comfortably accommodated in a refurbished RWH.

In the TRC records, RWH is valued at \$50 million and is written down to \$28 million after amortisation. Its replacement value then is at least \$50 million. There is mixed information about the extent and cost of remediation of the asbestos problem. Recent works undertaken for \$2 million was publicly stated to have remediated the internal walls of RWH and that there was largely no asbestos in the walls. The asbestos is apparently located in the ceiling in the lagging of the air conditioning. It is unclear what refurbishment cost would be.

In 1976, PTW Architects designed the Peel Cunningham County Council Chambers, Tamworth. A PTW Architects Brutalist project completed in 1976 to house the council offices, chambers, committee rooms and a computer installation.

The structure has two street frontages and consists of a ground floor, four upper floors and a basement carpark.

In addition to its numerous local government functions, it was the authority for the distribution of electricity to residents of Tamworth and surrounding districts.

RWH is an iconic example of the brutalist architectural style. The building was opened by the late Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.

At the very least there needs to be an objective, verifiable consideration of the cost of refurbishment for RWH, the cost of building new premises in a new location, including the cost of purchase of land and the costs of continuing to operate as presently in renovated premises scattered throughout the city. The prospect of internal dislocation and continuation of silos and fiefdoms would also have ongoing costs.

We believe it is a very poor decision of TRC if they decide to sell RWH or otherwise deal with in manner that does not restore it to its original working condition. From the little information made available we understand that but for the asbestos issue, the building is structurally sound, RWH is centrally located in the CBD and should remain as the seat of regional local government,

We ask all residents of the Tamworth region to register your support on the Facebook site.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/save.ray.walsh.house/>

Yours sincerely

Tamworth Regional Residents and Ratepayers Association

Cc Tamworth Regional Council
Councillors Tamworth Regional Council