

ITEM 18

NOTICE OF RESCISSION - COUNCILLOR DEIDRE STUART, COUNCILLOR KIT DOCKER AND COUNCILLOR JESS WHITTAKER- DISPOSAL OF LOT 331 DP 16051, 28 LAKE AVENUE CRINGILA

Councillors Deidre Stuart, Kit Docker and Jess Whittaker have submitted the following Notice of Rescission

“We the undersigned Councillors, hereby give notice that we wish to move rescission of Council’s resolution of 5 May 2025 – Minute No 48 – relating to Item 4 of Council Report – Disposal of Lot 331 DP 16051, 28 Lake Avenue Cringila.”

Council’s resolution of 5 May 2025 in relation to this matter is as follows:

Minute Number 48

That -

- 1 Council authorise the sale of Lot 331 DP 16051 being 28 Lake Avenue, Cringila, on the open market.
- 2 The General Manager be authorised to approve the sale strategy and finalise the sale price and the terms of the sale.
- 3 The Lord Mayor and General Manager be granted authority to affix the Common Seal of Council to any documentation required to give effect to this resolution and the General Manager be granted authority to sign any documentation necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Background provided by Councillor Stuart:

On 5 May 2025, Council resolved to sell Lot 331 DP 16051, 28 Lake Avenue, Cringila. Since this decision was passed, residents of Cringila have made contact with Councillors voicing their concerns. On the afternoon of Friday 9 May, Councillors Whittaker, Docker, and myself met with residents to hear these concerns.

Wollongong City Council owns 28 Lake Avenue, Cringila, having purchased the site in 1986 with the intent to develop a community centre on the site. The site is operational land and was never intended to be used as a public reserve or park. However, the site currently contains a park bench on a concrete slab and trees planted by Council in the late 1980s. The site has become redundant to Councils needs due to the construction of the Cringila Community Centre and Hall across the road and two properties south (up the hill) from the site. According to Councils business papers from 5 May 2025, there are two nearby Council-owned Community land zoned RE1 for public recreation at John Crehan Park about six minutes’ walk away and at Cringila Hill Playground about 13 minutes’ walk away.

We seek to overturn this decision, based on our new understanding of how Cringila residents use this space citing the following reasons -

- 1 Cringila residents currently use the site as a park, in many incidental kinds of ways, and the block has become a place appreciated by locals. The site is not fenced and being open with several shady trees and a picnic table, the space is very welcoming. People use the park, especially before or after accessing the shops or medical services on Lake Ave. People also wait for buses or rest after alighting from the bus (the bus stop is next to the site). Elderly people rest there. People buy food nearby and sit at the table and eat there. Moreover, there is an early childhood centre located diagonally across Gorrell Street, and Cringila Public School located about 600 metres further south. Parents with very young children often use it as a play area or meeting area, and sometimes it is a convenient meeting place for parents with their school-aged children.
- 2 Residents say that they do not use the outdoor spaces in front of the Cringila Community Centre and Hall. Notably, the space outside contains some play equipment, and some park benches, but is fenced entirely along Lake Avenue. When we visited at 4:30pm on what was a beautiful Friday afternoon the gates were closed, so even if locals wanted to use the outside space, they could not. The centre is apparently open only Mondays to Thursday 9am to 4:30pm, so it is not suitable as an

incidental meeting place on weekends or very early morning or late afternoons. Our experience was that 28 Lake Avenue, by contrast, was a very amenable meeting place.

- 3 Residents also say that they do not use John Crehan Park. They say it is not nearby when walking, especially if you are tired or struggling physically. Moreover, they say it is unwelcoming and the gate at the front, at the bottom of a short gravel driveway hill, is often closed with a sign saying *PRIVATE GROUND – KEEP OUT*. We visited it together. At about 6pm on Friday 9 May, the large gate across the road at the bottom was open. This was apparently because training was underway, but otherwise the gate, which does say *PRIVATE GROUND – KEEP OUT* is usually closed. John Crehan Park seems to be treeless football fields – and lacks the cosy appeal, amenity and convenience of the 28 Lake Avenue site. Given the sign and given the general lack of amenity, it seems little wonder that residents do not feel welcome there.
- 4 Residents also expressed an appreciation for the six trees on the site, which appear to be local native *Melaleuca stypheliodes* (an Illawarra lowland grassy woodland species), that look mature. One person expressed that Cringila feels very industrial and the trees soften that experience. Wollongong City Council's *Urban Greening Strategy 2017-2037* indicates Cringila has about 20% canopy cover, significantly less than the stated optimal of 35%.
- 5 Residents are very disappointed that there has not been any recent consultation about a potential sale of the site.