

Facts are facts no matter how inconvenient.

Item 13 at last night's meeting (2025.10.14) had many liberal councillors calling "point of order" when a Labor councillor dared mention the word "Eastwood" in connection with the Fred Caterson Reserve Pony Club development and council's recommendation to spend \$16,615,000 to build 3 rugby fields.

It needs to be remembered that the Fred Caterson Reserve Masterplan and the Expression of Interest from Eastwood Rugby Club were adopted together, as part of the same agenda item on November 24, 2020. To have 2 documents adopted together like this is highly unusual.

This is the reality of history, and no amount of gaslighting or false narrative can change the truth. These are not genuine community fields to which new Showground residents will have unlimited use. They will not be able to play or train on them unless they are already representative rugby players.

Publicly highlighting the facts is not "scare mongering" as liberal councillors accused the community of last night. Having full access to transparent information is an essential pillar of our democracy and ought not be hindered by those with power.

Within the 2020 ordinary council meeting "Eastwood" was mentioned 18 times when councillors were talking to the motion to adopt both the Fred Caterson Reserve Masterplan and Expression of Interest from Eastwood together.

Recent pushback from the community has led to a newly created narrative being used as propaganda by the current Hills Shire Council. They are choosing to ignore historical facts.

Perhaps all current liberal councillors ought to listen to the audio recording from the 2020.11.24 ordinary council meeting to refresh their memories.

History cannot be re-written but it appears that many with the current Hills Shire Council are trying to do just that. They are attempting to justify the expenditure of \$16,615,000 of public developer contribution funds as being for the new Showground Station residents while they continue to negotiate with well advanced plans to licence the facilities to Eastwood Rugby Club for 30 years.

Talk about a golden deal for Eastwood Rugby Club.

Item 13 at last night's council meeting was voted upon. Labor and The Greens councillors all voted against the motion, while all the Liberal councillors voted to accept the following recommendations;

1. Accept the tender offer for Tender T25-0215
2. Approve additional funds of \$12,402,570 (which will allow the eventual expenditure of \$16,615,242. Representing a 75% cost blow out on original budget allocation in the Developer Contributions Plan – CP No. 19.)

3. Authority be delegated to the General Manager to execute the contracts relating to the tender.

Eastwood will ultimately become the licence holder of a 6.8ha parcel of public Crown land along with \$16,615,000 of new infrastructure. They will be the recipients of a new home ground in Fred Caterson Reserve, exactly as the 2020 councillors openly and proudly talked about.

It is plain for all to see that historically the proposed new fields have always been allocated to Eastwood Rugby Club, and with current licence negotiations taking place it will soon be formalised for a 30-year period.

Inconvenient facts are not only historical; they are also contemporary.

Documents obtained via Freedom of Information show the Traffic and Acoustic studies which formed part of the Review of Environmental Factors associated with the tender, also refer to Eastwood Rugby Club on multiple occasions.

For example;

1. Acoustic Services Report (March 2024)

- Page 9 - "is very similar to the Eastwood Rugby Grounds"
- Page 13 – "TABLE 9 ESTIMATED PARKING REQUIRED FOR EASTWOOD CLUB"

2. Traffic Study (February 2024)

- Page 3 – "In late 2021, Council received a proposal by the Eastwood Union club for the provision of three fields on the current Pony Club near the Fred Caterson Reserve as illustrated in Figure 1."
 - Page 14 – "Stage 2 to be provided by the Union Club"
 - Permanent seating for up to 2,000 patrons
 - A centre of excellence with associated facilities
 - 4.2 Estimate of Parking Requirement
- It is anticipated that training activities by Eastwood Club will take place on weeknight."
- Page 15 – "Table 4.2: Estimated Parking Required for Eastwood Club"
- Page 18 -

Table 4.7: Future Operation of Intersections with Proposed Complex at Sage 2

Intersection	Existing	Adjusted Winter Season	With Eastwood Club

- Page 19 – "The Eastwood Union club is proposing the provision of three rugby fields on the current Pony Club near the Caterson Reserve. All access will be via Gilbert Road where a left turn in and out only off Gilbert Road is proposed.
- "Training activities by Eastwood Club will take place on weeknight. On weekends, predominately on Saturdays, there could be crowds of up to 200 people to watch

regular games. When the main Premier game is taking place from 3pm once a fortnight, a crowd of between 1500 and 2,000 persons may be in attendance.

- When a Premier Game takes place on a Saturday afternoon up to 480 spaces may be required. On these occasions, the proposed parking supply will not be sufficient.

Facts are facts and they speak for themselves.

The following are all exact quotes from the transcribed audio recording of the Ordinary Council meeting on 24th November, 2020.

1. Dr Michelle Byrne; (25:12 minute)

- We move to item four, post exhibition report Fred Caterson Reserve draft concept master plan and Expression of Interest.
- Tonight we have in favour Robert Frost, the general manager of Eastwood Rugby who would like to address us through the general manager.

2. Robert Frost; (25:26 minute)

- The recommendation before council tonight represents the culmination of years of hard work by a number of people from our club.
- Looking to the new ground at Fred Caterson this is a wonderful site full of potential.

3. Councillor Gangemi; (begins at 31:39 and says the following at approx. 35:50 minute)

- I wanted to say welcome aboard to Eastwood. We are very excited here in the hills.
- We've been looking for a key place for Rugby Union and I think this would be a very exciting partnership for the years ahead.
- So I fully support the adoption of the master plan and accepting the EOI as well.

4. Councillor Uno (begins at 36:35 and says the following at approx. 39:30)

- we now welcome Eastwood Rugby Club. And looking forward to a strong and close connection with the club in the future

5. **Councillor Collins** (39:46 minute)

- Now we have the pleasure of **Eastwood District rugby union Club** joining a long list of other great sporting teams and clubs that want to be a part of what we do here in the Hills Community.
- And I know Mr Tribulay is in the room tonight and I've seen him around the traps and **my son was heavily involved with Eastwood.**
- **I've been a part of it in a whole raft of different ways through my son,** but it epitomises everything that really is good about rugby union and to think that we're gonna have them in the bosom of us and this community I think is outstanding
- So I certainly commend the motion before us tonight. Very, very excited Madame mayor to **have Eastwood on board and sharing the facilities we have in the Hills Shire.**

6. **Councillor Preston** (43:04 minute)

- **and I was first approached by Eastwood rugby about four years ago** I think it would be, and that was the start of the journey for the hills shire council. **Because they had an interest in relocating, because where they are was getting quite congested. There was an opportunity to put that land on the market and then where do we go from there? So really, a conversation began at that time and I remember Mister Edgar was able to engage in conversation to look at the possibilities. So it's been hatching for quite some time.**
- **Eastwood Rugby** with his club in his area.
- do they still remain **as Eastwood Rugby** or do they think of changing the name?
- and if you have a look at the financials that have been presented to us in the information received, none other than Brett Papworth's signature is on the financials here, who is a wonderful **Eastwood rugby player** and also an international. so you know we're actually bringing on board Talent from the chairs position, the CEO, the advisors, the history of this club and the new opportunities for young players in the hills, because a lot of **Eastwood Rugby players** are from the hills and I think that was really the natural draw card.
- **Eastwood Rugby looked** around and said we have a high percentage of Hills players in our club so why not relocate to an area that suits them as well.
- I'm really proud that we can stand here tonight and say none other than **the famous Eastwood Rugby Club Is Coming To The Hills.** How good is that?
- and how good his Minister Constance? we had this land earmarked by the state government to use as an operational site and I was very fortunate to have a bent ear with Minister Constance at the time and I said look we have got a plan going forward for this land. and he sat there and listened to me and **I explained the intention of the master plan for Fred Caterson and the opportunity that Eastwood Rugby would**

present to us and within 24 hours he reversed the decision of the state government and was able to give us this opportunity.

- so we stand here today because of a lot of people coming together with great intentions and I'm very proud that Eastwood rugby is also wanting to fund three million dollars towards this project and also undertake the maintenance...

7. **Councillor Hazelden** (47:02)

- Madame mayor, finally, just a point of clarification if I may through to the general manager. In the submission, attachment two, I'm just not quite sure of the relationship between Eastwood Rugby Union football club and what appears to be the parent organization Verada. Vimera sorry. so I'm just assuming that the reference to the commercial arrangements will be between council and Vimera, is that correct?

Mr Frost, answered the question from Councillor Hazelden.

Mr Frost replied with the following –

- We use the term Eastwood Rugby. Underneath it there are these 2 organisations, there is the football club and the Trust. The football club is a member-driven organization, the trust controls the money. we've made it so that the members cannot at any way get hold of the money or change the trust. the money will flow through, from the trust through the football club, to the contribution to the council. so the arrangement, unless we come up with a different plan between us, would be for the agreement to be with the football club.

8. **Councillor Russo** (50:52)

- I think everyone is as excited as I am to see Fred Caterson, you know, be redeveloped
- it says very clearly within our business paper fred Caterson Reserve will become the shire's most prominent community destination for sport, recreation and events.

(52:10) Motion to adopt the Fred Caterson Reserve Masterplan and the Expression of Interest from Eastwood Rugby Club was carried unanimously.

Bibliography;

1. The archived audio recording of the 2020.11.24 meeting can be found here;

https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/ecm-website-documents/meeting-council/24112020-cnc/attachments-24112020-cnc/ordinary_council_meeting_recording.mp3

2. Meeting Agenda;

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 24 NOVEMBER, 2020

ITEM-4 POST EXHIBITION REPORT - FRED CATERSON RESERVE - DRAFT CONCEPT MASTER PLAN AND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Draft Concept Master Plan for the Fred Caterson Reserve be adopted with identified changes shown in this report to be amended.
2. The Expression of Interest submission by Eastwood District Rugby Union Football Club be accepted and the Mayor and General Manager be authorised to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Council's behalf.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Fred Caterson Reserve Draft Master Plan (56 Pages)
2. Submission from Eastwood District Rugby Union Football Club and EOI Assessment (distributed under separate cover)

<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Council/Meeting-Agendas-Minutes/Ordinary-Meetings/Archived-Minutes-and-Agenda>

[file:///C:/Users/Family/Documents/Fred%20Caterson/2020.11.24%20Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda%20fred%20acterson%20masterplan%20and%20EOI.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Family/Documents/Fred%20Caterson/2020.11.24%20Ordinary%20Council%20Meeting%20Agenda%20fred%20acterson%20masterplan%20and%20EOI.pdf)

3. Meeting minutes;

ITEM-4 POST EXHIBITION REPORT - FRED CATERSON RESERVE - DRAFT CONCEPT MASTER PLAN AND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Proceedings in Brief

Robert Frost of Marsfield (In favour) addressed Council through the General Manager.

A MOTION WAS MOVED BY COUNCILLOR RUSSO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

DE MASI THAT the Recommendation contained in the report be adopted.

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Council/Meeting-Agendas-Minutes/Ordinary-Meetings/Archived-Minutes-and-Agenda>

[file:///C:/Users/Family/Documents/Fred%20Caterson/2020.11.24%20Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes%20\(4\)%20Fred%20Caterson%20Reserve%20masterplan%20and%20EOI.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Family/Documents/Fred%20Caterson/2020.11.24%20Ordinary%20Council%20Meeting%20Minutes%20(4)%20Fred%20Caterson%20Reserve%20masterplan%20and%20EOI.pdf)