

Labor calls for inquiry over disqualified councillor

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RECENTLY convicted former councillor and mayor Artin Etmekdjian has been disqualified as a councillor and Ryde Labor is calling for an inquiry into the issue.



Ryde Labor Cdr Jerome Laxale has called for an investigation related to disqualified former Mayor Artin Etmekdjian. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO

A statement released by the City of Ryde announced the disqualification last Wednesday.

“Based on Council’s legal advice, Artin Etmekdjian is disqualified from holding public office as a Councillor at the City of Ryde.

“The Acting General Manager, Roy Newsome, has referred this matter to the Office of Local Government (OLG) to determine if any further action is required to be undertaken by the Office of Local Government.

“No further comment will be made.”

Mr Etmekdjian was sentenced on April 11 to seven months imprisonment after being convicted of dishonestly attempting to influence a Commonwealth Official in a tax related offence.

The Australian Taxation Office further announced he will serve the sentence by way of an Intensive Correction Order.

His disqualification leaves the Ryde Liberals with only four of ten councillors after former councillor Craig Chung left this year to take up a position on the City of Sydney Council.

Ryde's two Labor councillors Jerome Laxale and George Simon have expressed concern about the Etmekdjian issue and have lodged the following motion:

"That the General Manager, as soon as practicable, provide a legal briefing on matters that have been considered at Council since Councillor Etmekdjian entered a guilty plea on January 24, to ensure that the decisions of council have not been affected by the circumstances regarding Councillor Etmekdjian's conviction.

"That the General Manager conduct an internal investigation into matters relating to Councillor and Council staff's knowledge of Councillor Etmekdjian's legal affairs.

The investigation should include; whether Councillor Etmekdjian made any councillors or council staff aware of the proceedings against him by the ATO and; Whether any councillors or council staff became aware of the proceedings against Councillor Etmekdjian including his guilty plea on January 24?

The motion further states an investigation should include; If any Councillors or Council staff were aware of proceedings, what actions were taken as a result of that knowledge?

The two Labor Councillors have also called for an Extraordinary Meeting of Council in regard to this issue.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/labor-calls-for-inquiry-over-disqualified-councillor/>