

SE OTHER TOWNS
HD **FOR NEAR-ON two decades, Tamworth's velodrome has been**
WC 357 words
PD 19 December 2014
SN Northern Daily Leader
SC FNODAL
PG 8
LA English
CY Copyright 2014 Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited. . Not available for re-distribution.
LP

FOR NEAR-ON two decades, Tamworth's velodrome has been both a nursery of champions and a target of derision.

Plagued by controversy since the day it was completed, the Peel St track has been branded a "white elephant" by critics, who cite its prime CBD address and apparent lack of use.

TD

The Tamworth Cycle Club has remained a staunch defender of the velodrome, claiming it is used "substantially" during the track season from October to March.

But while it has long dominated the debate, how often the velodrome is used is immaterial.

The real issue is its location.

The looming arrival of a massive Woolworths/Dan Murphy's development across the road from the track has changed the game at the Paradise end of Peel St, so long the domain of fast food outlets and green spaces.

Money begets money and development begets development.

The opening of Woolworths will turn the tumbleweed section of Peel St into a more attractive **commercial** precinct.

And, in tough fiscal times, it makes sense for council to realise the best value for its assets.

It also makes sense for our sporting facilities to be centralised as much as possible.

Senior council figures say the **site** is not being eyed off by **Chinese company** Everich, which has recently **purchased** the Woolworths/Dan Murphy's block and has signalled its intention to build a five-star **hotel** in Tamworth.

But it's hard to imagine a buyer won't be found in quick time for a spacious Peel St parcel of land.

Council and the Tamworth Cycle Club should be commended for making the tough decision to move a part of history from the CBD to a more appropriate location.

The only missing piece of the puzzle is a few million shekels in state or federal funding to build a new track at the Longyard.

But with the government suddenly thrust into a fight for the seat of Tamworth, securing funding might just have become as easy as riding a bike.

RE nswals : New South Wales | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | austr : Australia
PUB Fairfax Media Management Pty Limited
AN Document FNODAL0020141218eacj0000I