

## Development to secure golf club's future

*David Barwell*

CHATSWOOD Golf Club is teeing up plans to develop a seniors living complex on part of the course, in a move club officials say will meet declining membership numbers and address the region's senior housing needs.

The club has joined with Watermark and Charter Hall on a proposal to build 106 apartments across two five-storey buildings on the eastern part of the site.

Club president Alan Hall-Watson said the plans included new function facilities, upgrades to the existing course and a hydrotherapy pool and other facilities for residents.

He said the development would address reduced club membership numbers.

Early planning documents said the club had been "trading at a loss" and was at "serious risk of failing".

The club's website adds the future of medium-sized clubs was "challenging" unless "new business models" could be found.

"There are various factors affecting reduced participation in golf (and) there have been a lot of clubs in NSW looking at doing one sort of development or the other," Mr Hall-Watson said.

"As an activity, the time it takes to play a round of golf is not always appealing to the younger generation or busy families and couples who are both working.

"As a club we needed to find other forms of revenue and we saw that as a unique way of providing broader community facilities for people aged over 55."

The plans show the development would be built on the existing clubhouse and carpark, and would not encroach on golfing greens or impact views on neighbouring properties.

This followed early feedback from Willoughby Council that stated it would not support any loss of RE2 private recreational zoned space on the course.

Mr Hall-Watson said the project was also aimed at meeting demand for seniors accommodation on the north shore.

This is in line with a statewide trend of golf clubs redeveloping their courses into seniors living complex, with similar proposals including a 95 room retirement village at the Bayview Golf Club in Mona Vale.

"We like a lot of areas are in need of accommodation for residents who are looking to downsize to a village style arrangement," Mr Hall-Watson said.

"The additional access to care is something local residents may not have otherwise."

Plans for the project were first released in 2017, and are currently being assessed by the Department of Planning for "site compatibility".

"The (Sydney North Planning Panel) will then consider the application and the department's assessment report," a department spokeswoman said.