

# MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Submission  
No 16

TK:tk: A0830002

08 August 2006

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYNDEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW**

I write in reference to your letter dated 07 July 2006 regarding the abovementioned matter.

Council has attached their submission with emphasis on the points outlined in your letter.

Should you have any further queries in relation to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 02 6378 2851.

Yours faithfully



BRAD CAM  
MANAGER OPERATIONS

Encl. Submission – Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW

## **Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW**

### **1. Adequacy of provision of quality sportsgrounds to meet community needs NSW:**

- Formation of peaks sports body to examine the needs of the sporting community and/or sports council/s within their LGA.
- Councils need to examine the changing recreational needs brought about by the population shifts and community attitudes towards physical fitness.
- Provision of sportsgrounds should be determined by amongst other things – type of sports that will be played there, participation rate and age groups, accessibility (near public transport), cost to council to maintain, if it will enable regional events to be held regularly thereby bring income to the area, effects on amenity of residents.

### **2. Cost and revenue arrangements including capital upgrades:**

- Overall there is insufficient funding made available for upgrading or development of fields to meet community needs in regional areas. The bigger towns have more scope for provision of recreational funding due to larger rate base and ability to attract ministerial interest .
- Some capital funding available for upgrades through Dept. of Sport and Recreation grants and some injection of funds from sports councils.
- Sports user groups should pay for use of council fields – the general community do not like seeing a lot of money spent on sports facilities. Continually needs revising if they want increased level of services.

### **3. Environmental concerns associated with sportsground management:**

- Run-off from irrigation/drainage.
- Community has raised concerns regarding pesticide applications to control pests and weed growth in turf species (will be addressed in upcoming Pesticide Use Notification Plan)
- Use of organic v chemical fertilisers and subsequent leaching into water table. Water sustainability – community may see irrigated fields as a waste of a valuable resource.
- Water usage has to be such that the minimum amount provides maximum turf growth to provide a safe surface, and fields constructed to drain adequately

### **4. Effectiveness of current administration of sportsgrounds:**

- Room for improvement in administration – often there can be communication problems between sports councils and management/maintenance staff. Often staff approached by clubs to carry out work instead of listing request through proper system.

- Room for clubs to assist council with maintenance activities and fund raising to put back into a particular sportsground. Problems occur when there is wet weather – who should have the final say in whether a facility should be closed?
- Council has to maintain the ground, expends vital funds to bring the field back into good condition, so therefore have the final say. The sporting groups say they or the referee should make a decision as they are the ones who know if the field is suitable for play. It will always be an area for controversy.

#### **5. Impact on health outcomes/social cohesion:**

- If areas of society, school children etc. are prevented from participating in sports due to lack of adequate facilities this has to impact on the health and well being of the community.
- Sport plays a vital role in the development of children and adults alike, and with the current obesity concerns lack of exercise and facilities on which to participate will only add to the problem.
- These facilities are also places where groups can meet and engage in other fitness /mental alertness type activities such as yoga, tai-chi? and activities of a similar type.

#### **6. Traffic, noise and direct impacts on residential amenity:**

- Any increase in the size of existing sportsgrounds or development needs to be considered carefully and well planned to avoid a number of possible problems.
- Traffic associated with sporting activities can be extremely heavy at times and makes pedestrian activity in the vicinity a hazardous situation.
- The residents of the area surrounding the sportsgrounds can also be affected by the traffic – parking across driveways and the like, the glare from floodlighting can impact on the quality of the residents, the noise, both from increased traffic and the crowds also can lead to a deterioration of quality in the residents everyday living.
- Buffers created by careful landscaping can assist in alleviating some of the amenity problem however traffic flows are a hot topic which can be hard to resolve.

#### **7. Affect of litigation and insurance costs on financial viability:**

- Could be a big problem for councils in the future if current trend of pursuing litigation for injuries on sportsgrounds continues.
- If sportsgrounds cannot be kept to a safe standard and councils are continually sued for damages, it is possible councils may have to close sportsgrounds to avoid large increases in insurance premiums.
- Maintenance budgets do not always allow for the necessary works to be undertaken to keep fields safe.
- With less sportsgrounds available the pressure is then on the remaining fields to cope with the overflow which may lead to a drop in standards on those grounds and ongoing problems with the long term viability of the facility.
- Contracts may have to be entered into with sportsground users to lessen liability on councils.

**8. Access to open space for active and passive recreational users:**

- There will be an increasing demand for open space in the future as the population increases.
- However areas of open space are being consumed for the increasing housing market. This has more impact for the passive users of open space, such as walkers who now can walk through areas of bushland but in the future may find this sold up for development.
- If new sporting facilities cannot be developed to cope with demand, then sportspersons may find they do not have adequate access to do the sport they want to participate in which in some cases may lead to psychological problems – feeling of not being recognised and forgotten about.
- It may force more children to hang around on the streets therefore contributing to social problems in some areas.