



11th August 2006

Parks & Leisure Australia and current Industry members of the Sydney Sports Capacity Working Group - AFL NSW/ACT, SoccerNSW, CricketNSW

**Submission to
Legislative Assembly
Standing Committee on Public Works**

INQUIRY INTO SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT IN NSW

Parks & Leisure Australia (PLA) members, local government park professional, individual sporting codes and volunteers have become increasingly aware of the need of the Parks Industry to develop a united voice to address the issues arising with the sustainability and capacity of sportsgrounds in urban areas such as Sydney.

Following significant discussions over the last 2 years the PLA NSW Regional Council has voted to in 2006 establish an Industry Working Group to be known as the **Sydney Sports Capacity Working Group** to work towards developing research and offering solutions to this whole of industry issue.

Membership to the working Group will be open to a wide range of Industry Partners who are part of the delivery of sporting fields to the community.

Currently we are expecting the following range group to be invited to provide representation.

- PLA (NSW) Regional Council representatives
- AFL
- Soccer NSW
- Cricket NSW
- NSW Rugby League
- Individual Councils
- Sporting Peak Bodies

The **Sydney Sports Capacity Working Group** - chaired Stephen Bourke (National President) will work to address the current sustainability, capacity and planning issues faced by members and the industry regarding access and use of quality playing fields.

We are concerned with the lack of funding available to conduct regional sports planning in New South Wales and would like the inquiry to review and recommend assistance to the Industry Working Group in this regard.

Role of the Working Group

The primary objective of this group is to work to better understand the **supply** and **demand** issues that impact on the capacity of playing fields.

As a starting point the group will be invited to work towards establishing an inventory or audit of the current state of playing fields. An audit of playing fields is required which at the very least covers the list below.

- A. identifies particular sports users.

- B. differentiates between the public, private and educational sectors and ascertains the availability of school fields
- C. identifies pitch availability on different times and days (including the impact of floodlights if appropriate)
- D. identifies the availability and quality of changing accommodation assesses the quality of fields
- E. takes account of the availability of safe and adequate car parking and accessibility by public transport
- F. assesses whether individual fields have capacity for further use
- G. considers any constraints on use such as the shortage of changing accommodation, dual use, drainage etc.
- H. considers whether opportunities for other open space uses have been or could be realised.

The Working Group has been established following the successful Industry discussions held in May. Some details of the issues raised are summarised below.

Sports Fields Planning for New Growth

On the 24th May 2006 PLA hosted a major workshop on this issue with the support of Dept of Sport and Recreation and Centennial Parklands. The full day workshop brought together the industry to discuss a way forward to the challenges faced. A summary of the key findings are listed below and briefing paper is attached as Attachment 2.

The key priority issues noted by attendees were:

- Allocation of facilities
- Coordination/common voice
- Quality of facilities
- Other issues mentioned include:
- Data collection on sports & field capacity
- Diversification of Training Practices to allow fields to recover and
- A focus also on Indoor Facilities

Across all the issues the Key Drivers noted were ranked as follows:

- Parks & Leisure Australia
- Local Government
- Department of Sport & Recreation
- Sydney Water
- Department of Planning
- Individual Sporting Codes

Issues addressed included:

Planning

- Lack of a strategic approach to open space in Greenfield
- defensible open space standards
- Insufficient recreation planners in local government to influence \$
- Failure of dual use concept
- Responsibilities at 3 levels of government unclear
- Established LGA's not planning new fields despite demand

Management / Operation

- High land costs
- Measures for Carrying capacity not defined



- Reluctance of schools to allow community use due to security
- Ongoing water shortages
- Change of season issues – short time allowed
- Parking and noise issues at fields

Competition / Structure

- Traditions of weekend sport
- Growth in clubs not linked to facility capacity
- Season creep

Solutions raised included:

Fields

- Innovative design solutions – utilise wasted spaces in the city
- Recognising a limit to the number of fields provided
- Reducing fields on landfill sites
- Formal agreements for joint use of public and private school fields
- Water harvesting
- Rebuilding fields (drainage /irrigation) to improve capacity

Capacity

- Twilight competitions
- Shorten junior sport season, no school holiday games
- Computerised floodlights to limit training times
- Recognising the limit and promoting other activities/sport

Attachments

- Attachment 1 Attendees at Workshop
- Attachment 2 Sports Fields – Planning for New Growth Workshop May 2006– Discussion Paper.
- Attachment 3 Sports Fields – Planning for New Growth Workshop feedback

Strong industry leadership is needed to identify the issues that have caused capacity and sustainability issues and then to identify strategies to reduce the problems associated with overuse and lack of suitable sporting grounds.

.Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Taylor".

Mark Taylor
President

Parks and Leisure Australia – NSW Region

Submission supported by:

Clare Toia-Bailey AFL NSW /ACT

Angela MacGuinness – Grounds Development Officer - Soccer NSW

Ian Field - CricketNSW



For further information please contact the NSW Secretariat

Barry Schipplock

A central phone number **(02) 9281 4545** has been established for all PLA enquiries or email admin@cameo.net.au.

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Attachment 1

ATTENDEES AT SPORTS CAPACITY WORKSHOP

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Craig	Bagley	Sydney Olympic Park Authority
Frank	Barrett	NSW Rugby League
Cheryl	Battaerd	Active After Schools Program
Stephen	Bourke	Parks & Leisure Australia
Matthew	Bulkeley	Football Federation Australia
Carolyn	Campbell	Netball NSW
Darryl	Clout	NSW Sport & Recreation
Grant	Collins	Penrith City Council
Steve	Corbett	Centennial Parklands
Vince	Cusamano	Leichhardt Council
Libby	Darlison	Chair Premiers Council for Active Living
Christine	Deaner	Sydney Olympic Park Authority
Tatajana	Domazet	Bankstown Council
John	Egan	NSW Sport & Recreation
Marcia	Endacott	Australian Sports Commission
Paul	Erickson	Dept of Education
Ian	Field	Cricket NSW
Jim	Forrest	Soccer NSW
John	Gordon	Sutherland Council
Cathy	Gorman-Brown	NSW Sport & Recreation
Geoff	Green	Green Horticultural Group
Katrina	Hadrill	NSW Sport & Recreation
James	Harris	Shoalhaven Council
Lara	Hayes	Australian Sports Commission
Michael	Haynes	Basketball Australia
Peter	Hickman	Ryde City Council
Dave	Hill	Dept of Education
Nigel	Hobden	Orange Council
Kate	Hooper	Centennial Parklands
Sandy	Hoy	Parkland Environmental Planners
Lucy	Jenkins	SSROC
Laurie	Johnson	City of Sdney
Anita	Keelan	Netball Australia
Bob	Lamaro	Dept of Education
Simon	Laughton	AFL (NSW/ACT)
Steve	Lawler	Pittwater Council
David	Lawson	Cricket NSW
Crosbie	Lorimer	Facilitator - Clouston Associates
Fiona	MacColl	Canada Bay Council
Angela	MacGuinness	Soccer NSW
Greg	McCallum	NSW Sports Federation
Mick	McEntyre	Dept of Education
Allan	McKinnon	AFL (NSW/ACT)
Ian	McNaught	Sutherland Council
Di	McNeill	Australian Sports Commission
Les	Munn	Pittwater Council
Kim	Murphy	Basketball NSW
Heather	Nesbitt	PIA Representative



Alex
George
Bernadette
Bret
Gayle
Barry
Natasha
David
Dana
Peter
Mark
Clare
Kerry
Tony
Phillip
David
Bernadette
Keith
Linda
Jeff
Louise
Narelle
Julie
John
Graham

Nicol
Nowak
Pinnell
Rodgers
Rogers
Schiplock
Sherwood
Smith
Spence
Tate
Taylor
Toia-Bailey
Turner
Veal
Vita
von Schill
Walker
Wallace
Ward
Wearing
Weaver
Wheatland
Whitfield
Wilkinson
Wright

Warringah Council
Clarence Valley Council
Tangent Leisure Consultants
Warringah Council
Active Australia Schools Network
CAMEO
Premiers Council for Active Living
Northern NSW Soccer
Hornsby Council
NSW Sports Federation & GROW
Parks & Leisure Australia
AFL (NSW/ACT)
NSW Sport and Recreation
UTS
Department of Health
NSW Sport & Recreation
Centennial Parklands
NSW Sport & Recreation
Pittwater Council
Wollongong Council
NSW Rugby League
GROW
Willoughby Council
Baulkham Hills Council
Auburn Council



About PLA

Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) has a strong history of over 75 years service to the industry through its predecessor organisations - the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation and the Australian Leisure Institute. PLA has built on the strengths developed through its past traditions, projects and networks to become a progressive, dynamic Association, which promotes the values and benefits of parks and leisure within Australian society.

PLA aims to:

- Provide a national organisation which promotes co-operation and mutual assistance between persons and organisations associated with public parks, botanic gardens and open space environments; recreation and leisure facilities and services;
- Promote the aesthetic, scientific and social development and study of all matters related to and impacting on, the management and operation of public parks, botanic gardens and open space environments; recreation and leisure facilities and programs;
- Act as an advocate and representative body of the Australian parks and leisure profession to all levels of government and business instrumentalities;
- Promote a conservation ethic within the profession and throughout the parks and leisure industry;
- Maintain a high standard and status for the professions within the Australian parks and leisure industry;
- Assist in the development of parks and leisure professionals through the promotion and support for appropriate information, education and training opportunities;
- Arrange meetings and opportunities for member information exchange, through formal and informal forums and conferences, as well as disseminate a range of published material relating to all aspects of parks and leisure services;
- Encourage the application of appropriate resources towards the development and maintenance of parks and leisure services across Australia;
- Stimulate the development of service levels within the industry and the achievement of best practice.

Who are our members?

Parks and Leisure Australia is the key professional association for members of the parks and leisure industry. Membership ranges across staff and management of parks, gardens, sport, aquatic, rehabilitation; aged hostels and recreation centres, at local and state government levels, students from tertiary institutions, academics, private consultants, private operators of facilities and many more.

For more information see the PLA National website:

[PLAnew2](#)

Sports Fields – Planning for New Growth Workshop Discussion Paper

Paper compiled on behalf of PLA by John Gordon Manager Sport & Recreation
Sutherland Shire Council

“The most commonly reported issues affecting Council’s within the region are an undersupply of facilities, overuse of facilities, limited space for additional facility development, the standard of facility expected and extensions to the traditional seasons.”

Taken from a sports strategy paper developed by a Victorian Council, this quote summarises many of the issues facing sporting field providers and many sports in NSW today.

When one considers that –

- The population of Sydney will increase by 1.1 million people over the next 25 years.
- Obesity has become a significant health issue.
- Governments are actively encouraging increased participation in sport and active leisure.
- Sports are actively seeking to increase participation numbers.
- Sports grounds are at capacity and the opportunities for developing additional facilities are limited.... We face some challenges!

Given that participation in sport and active leisure provides so many positive health and social outcomes, the industry (governments, sport and the community) needs to recognise playing field capacity as a significant issue that requires collective thought and discussion to ensure that the industry is positioned and to meet current and future growth.

This paper summarises a number of key issues developed by Parks and Leisure Australia in a ‘Capacity and Sustainability of Sports Grounds Scoping Project’ paper developed for the Victorian Government with some additional Sydney context.

(To view full document see the PLA website <http://www.parks-leisure.com.au/> and follow links from Regional Projects/ NSW Page)

The issues identified are common across states and are designed to stimulate thoughts and ideas for discussion at the forum on Sports Fields – Planning for New Growth Workshop.

Supported by:



PLA NSW
Research Sponsor:



NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

Sports fight for space

Introduction

In response to findings of planning studies and wide industry concerns PLA in NSW is contributing to a national issue to better address the capacity and sustainability of sports field. These issues were recently raised at “The Future of Recreation in Sydney” PLA Seminar in 2004 and last year’s PLA National Conference which led to further media coverage of the issue.

SATURDAY mornings are synonymous with friendly rivalry — but behind the innocence of junior sport lurks a bitter conflict.

Sydney’s chronic lack of playing fields has increased tensions between sporting organisations.

Brought into closer proximity to one another, rival organisations are finding it harder and harder to share a diminishing resource.

Accusations of underhanded hiring tactics and dubious deals with councillors are being hurled about amid a fusillade of sniping and bickering.

Increasing populations, higher density housing, government campaigns aimed at increasing physical activity, the introduction of new sports, changing participation patterns, drought and increased sport registrations are all impacting on the sustainability of sporting grounds across NSW. In much of NSW we are now faced with an undersupply of sports ground that receive too much use. Ground conditions deteriorate as the carrying capacity is exceeded. Opportunities for grounds to recover are limited as summer and winter seasons merge into one. Teams and individuals are being turned away from activity and competition as there is simply no more space available. How do we plan for a sustainable future?

Some of the key issues identified include –

Changing Demographics – The population of Sydney will increase by 1.1 million people in the next 25 years to give the city a population of 5.3 million people. These people will be more active for longer. No longer do you ‘hang up the boots at 30’, rather you are encouraged to be active for the ‘whole of life’, resulting in an ongoing strong demand for activity, services and facilities.

Higher Density Housing – The Department of Planning in NSW identified one of the key planning issues as dealing with increasing residential densities. As the traditional quarter acre block becomes a distant memory, so does the opportunity for activity in and around the home. In order to take part in informal recreational activities people will have little option but to use the local sports ground or another area of public open space.

Changing Nature of Sport and Leisure Participation

Seasons are extending, with traditional dates moving or merging to create a situation in which many grounds only receive one or two weeks rest between seasons. Grounds cannot recover, renovations have little impact and surface quality deteriorates. Many sports have introduced ‘all year’ competitions, with a number of traditional winter sports now conducting summer competitions.

Women and girls have in recent years embraced traditionally male dominated sports such as soccer. This has generated additional use of fields for both training and competition, impacting on sustainability. This change has also required an increased need for change rooms that can meet the needs for female participants and umpires.

Across much of NSW there has been a significant increase in the numbers of participants across 'traditional' sports such as football, cricket and particularly soccer. Relatively new or developing sports such as Oztag, softball, baseball and hockey are also experiencing increases in growth. Many sports are now developing recreational programs held on week nights, meeting the demand for more flexible, social, pay as you go low commitment sports. These programs have been successful in attracting new participants, placing further strain on already overused sporting grounds.

Development Programs

In 2005 the Federal government announced a \$800,000 grant over three years to the new Telstra Football Anytime Program. The program aims to teach children aged 6 to 12 years of age basic motors skills and the rules of football in a fun environment, providing a pathway to competition and resulting in an increased number of players in local competitions. Whilst a positive initiative, there is no mention of the impact such a program may have on sports fields, or whether there are sufficient sports fields available for an increase in junior soccer player numbers. Many other such programs exist through a wide range of sports, including Milo "Have a Go" – Cricket, Auskick – Australian Rules. All the programs are providing quality development programs and pathways into structured competition.

Government Initiatives

Governments at all levels have devoted significant resources to the promotion of physical activity as a means of maintaining and improving physical and mental health. A key focus of these campaigns has been to increase the number of people playing sport and to increase the management and operational capacity of clubs. The availability and capacity of sports grounds on which these activities occur has not been addressed. Initiatives include -

Backing Australia's Sporting Ability – A More Active Australia identifies a number of goals including –

- Significantly increase the number of people participating in sport right across Australia, including rural and regional communities
- Markedly increase youth participation in organised sport
- To deliver expanded and / or new sporting competitions and opportunities for all Australians at the grass roots level.

The After School Sports Program aims to increase participation rates in sport and physical activity for young people. Activities are undertaken in the school environment with linkages being made to the local sporting clubs. Based on participation numbers in the program and a 10% take up rate with local sporting clubs, there would be an additional 15,000 juniors joining club based sport within two years.

Sporting Technology

Improved technology has greatly impacted on the ability of sports grounds to cater for increased usage. However there is always a limit how much use an enhanced surface can receive. Despite these advances many municipal sports fields were developed many years ago on low value land, were poorly constructed by today's standards and have a limited capacity to sustain significant increases in use.

Very few outdoor sporting grounds are without lighting for training or competition. Lighting allows essential access to grounds for training after school / work that could otherwise not be undertaken. Lighting provides greater access and encourages additional use and increases the level of use on a ground. Poor lighting also results in increased wear as training tends to be undertaken under the areas of highest lighting intensity, creating specific areas of overuse.

Improved grass types and quality has improved the capacity of sports fields considerably, however no matter how good the turf is, turf has a horticultural capacity (hours of use, type of sport) that when reached results in a deterioration of the surface quality, playability and safety. Horticultural capacity is a significant factor in long term sustainability of sports grounds in NSW.

The ability to sustain quality sporting fields has been significantly impacted upon by the drought currently affecting NSW. Current restrictions limit the capacity of providers to sustain turf growth, undertake positive renovations and provide a quality playing surface.



A Way Forward?

- Industry wide research into sports ground capacity and sustainability
- Focus on sub regional and regional planning
- Liaison between Federal, State and Local government planners, State Sporting Associations, Education department, Universities and Insurance Companies
- Review the Way in Which Sport is Delivered
- Development of Additional Fields
- Improved Leisure Planning, Education and Training

What is PLA planning to do?

PLA NSW Region has established a research priority for this issue in 2006. Our plan following this workshop is to submit for a grant under the Federal Government's Regional Communities Program GROW to address the two basic planning building blocks missing in a NSW Context:

- 1) An Inventory of Sporting Fields and relevant data including condition.
- 2) Develop and test a model for collecting improved Demand based assessments.

Previous work on these projects would allow PLA to access the 2003 Sydney Open Space Inventory data collected by the Dept of Planning and to review specific demand based studies, in particular work by Tony Veal from UTS.

We will need the assistance of the wider industry in providing matching funding and support for such research and we will be in touch during the next month to discuss the project and benefits of the industry approach in more detail.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the Department of Planning as our research sponsor in 2006.

For further information please contact the NSW Secretariat

Barry Schipplock

A central phone number **(02) 9281 4545** has been established for all PLA enquiries or email admin@cameo.net.au.

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Sports Fields Planning for New Growth Workshop Feedback Summary

The following is a summary of the data collected from the Feedback Summaries collected following the Planning for New Growth Workshop held May 24th, 2006.

Overall 96.7% of attendees reported the session as being good or higher, 60% rated it very good or excellent.

The three key priority issues noted by attendees were

1. Allocation of facilities
2. Coordination/common voice
3. Quality of facilities

Other issues mentioned include:

- Data collection on sports & field capacity
- Diversification of Training Practices to allow fields to recover and
- A focus also on Indoor Facilities

Across all the issues the Key Drivers noted were ranked as follows:

1. Parks & Leisure Australia
2. Local Government
3. Department of Sport & Recreation
4. Sydney Water
5. Department of Planning
6. Individual Sporting Codes

Similarly, across all the issues the Key Deliverers noted were ranked as follows:

1. Parks & Leisure Australia
2. Local Government
3. Department of Sport & Recreation
4. Sydney Water
5. Individual Sporting Codes
6. Department of Planning

As a result of this session 93.3% of attendees indicated they would like and would attend a follow up session on the above issues.

Further to this 83.3% of attendees indicated they were interested in receiving information on future Parks & Leisure Australia projects.

Quality of Seminar	Score	Percent
Excellent	4	13.3
very good	14	46.7
good	11	36.7
average	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Priority Issue 1	Frequency	Percent
Allocation of facilities	10	33.3
Coordination/common voice	8	26.7
Data collection on sports & field capacity	4	13.3
Quality of Facilities	3	10
Diversify training practices	1	3.3
Implementation of internal sports strategy	1	3.3
Indoor facilities	1	3.3
Total	28	93.3
No Response	2	6.7
Priority Issue 2	Frequency	Percent
Quality of Facilities	12	40
Allocation of facilities	2	6.7
Diversify training practices	2	6.7
Coordination/common voice	2	6.7
Data collection on sports & field capacity	1	3.3
Total	19	63.3
No Response	11	36.7
Priority Issue 3	Frequency	Percent
Data collection on sports & field capacity	2	6.7
Allocation of facilities	6	20
Diversify training practices	2	6.7
Coordination/common voice	6	20
Quality of facilities	1	3.3
Indoor facilities	1	3.3
Total	18	60
No response	12	40

Top 6 Issues	Frequency	Percent
Allocation of facilities	18	28%
Coordination/common voice	16	25%
Quality of Facilities	16	25%
Data collection on sports & field capacity	7	11%
Diversify training practices	5	8%
Indoor facilities	2	3%