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

To The Chairman,

Inquiry into Sports Ground Management

In response to the call for submissions, Yass Valley Council forwards the following comments on the factors identified:

1. Adequacy of provision of quality sports Grounds to meet community needs across NSW

There is a large increased need to provide additional facilities as a result of additional sports being undertaken in this Local Government Authority. Soccer and AFL have come to the town of Yass and now require the use of facilities. There is a demand to provide high standard facilities for all sports. Competing needs for horses and sports fields in the village environment has resulted in a less than satisfactory standard facility.

2. Cost and revenue arrangements including capital upgrades

The opportunity to provide new grounds is almost non-existent due to the cost. The cost of a new ground and facilities is in the order of \$1M and is not affordable for Councils of our size with such diverse competing demands. Upgrades can only be undertaken in very gradual stages. The provision of high quality grounds at village venues has to date been cost prohibitive.

Revenue is generally limited to rate revenue although some State sport and recreation grants were received some time ago. Some income is provided from Developer contributions however this is insignificant in terms of the cost to upgrade or provide new facilities. Amenities' facilities at venues are generally well below desirable standards.

The ability to fund improvements is hampered by the increase in construction costs. This was identified by a recent tender process outlining the cost of a new multipurpose amenities block being \$0.5M whereas it was expected to be able to be constructed for between \$150k and \$200K.

3. Environmental concerns associated with Sports Ground management

No concerns identified.

4. Effectiveness of current administration of sports grounds by various providers

Council is the administrator of facilities in the Local Government area and therefore cannot provide an impartial comment. It is noted that some schools do not have any of their own sporting facilities and rely on those provided by Council. Council does not charge the schools for usage of sportsgrounds.

5. Impact on health outcomes and social cohesion, particularly disadvantaged communities

The lack of suitable facilities in some locations inhibits social cohesion and the development of local sporting groups. An example being the village of Murrumbateman which has a poor quality sports ground resulting in sporting activities re-directing to the ACT (located 50 km away) instead of the building of a local sporting network. The lack of local sporting activities provides restricted opportunity for the younger section of the community to socialise and compete in a local community environment. The 'fabric of community' can be sustained and enhanced by the existence of local sporting bodies.

6. Traffic Noise and other direct impact on residential amenity

No significant problems

7. Affect of litigation and insurance costs on financial viability

The liability for Council in relation to a sporting incident that could be attributed to the surface condition is a concern for Council. Council insists on all user groups having their own liability insurance however the issue is still a major concern regarding potential liability. This is particularly the case where the grass cover on the sports grounds has become spasmodic as a result of water restrictions and in another case where a local village oval has a shared usage between equestrian activities and cricket.

8. Access to Open Space for active and passive recreational users

Sports grounds are accessible to the public for recreational activities although any organised group is required to provide public liability insurance. Unrestricted access has caused some consternation in relation to the use of ovals for golf practice, walking dogs and unwarranted vandalism often related to access onto the field by motor vehicles.

Yours Sincerely



Kerry McMurray
General Manager