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8<sup>th</sup>. August 2006

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Public Works.  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street.  
Sydney 2000

**SUBJECT: Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW.**

I hope I can make some contribution to the debate on the above-mentioned matter. The attached comments are brief and could be expanded if and when necessary.

As part of my responsibility as Physical Education and National Fitness Adviser I provided advisement to Local Government authorities in matters relating to Playing fields and recreation areas.. Later as Head of the School of Sport and Leisure Studies at UNSW I lectured in the field of Sports Administration.

I have had some 45 years experience in the field of Sport, Leisure and Recreation, both in Australia and North America. I have been involved in the administration and coaching of sport at the club and international level.

I look forward to further contributing to the debate.

W.W.EWENS.

Attached. Comments  
C.V.

## **SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT IN NSW.**

I have attempted to make comments under each of the headings suggested. However I realise that each is not independent and remarks in one category may be pertinent to others.

### 1. Adequacy Of Provision Of Quality Sportsgrounds To Meet Community Needs Across NSW.

It would be important to differentiate between;

- a. Specifically dedicated sportsgrounds, i.e. those that are specifically designed for particular sports or multiple sports use.
- b. The superimposed sports fields on land designated for general public recreation and leisure.

The former, when required for "major" sporting events, does not have the same conflict of use issues as the latter. [Local Government Act 1993]

The development of National, State and Regional level competitions has demanded additional playing fields. This is more so at the local level.

The development of professionalism, particularly in traditionally "winter" sports has restricted the use of playing fields for traditional summer sports.. This decreases the effective use of the ground and creates friction between the dual users, e.g. the overuse of suburban ovals by winter sports\* that, in turn, makes them unavailable for the early part of the summer sports season, i.e. rugby and cricket.

\*also true of "open park" playing fields used by juniors.

A further demand for grounds is created by the fact that the traditional Winter/Summer playing seasons no longer exist. Winter sports now demand playing fields from February through to October.

Clearly the demise of the "Old" seasonal agreement between winter and summer sports has increased the demand for playing fields.

At the elite level there is an increased demand for single sports facilities.

This approach developed by the major sporting associations has been copied by junior sports, thus increasing the demand for local "park" facilities.

The increase in population in established urban areas and the lack of open space, to develop additional playing fields, means demand exceeds supply. There are three issues associated with such a situation.

- The overuse of available grounds. The effect of this is the deterioration of the playing surface and the lengthening of the time for the grounds to recover.
- Where the grounds are in residential areas, the negative effects the overuse has on the residents of the area.  
*Noise, traffic, parking, night lighting and rubbish.*
- The unavailability of the parkland for general community use.

It is imperative that developing areas plan for the immediate need for playing fields and community leisure facilities. However it is equally important that projections for future needs are made and land retained for such development.

## 2. Cost And Revenue Arrangements Including Capital Upgrades.

Professional sports that attract sponsorship, TV coverage and have the ability to attract paying spectators as they use sports specific enclosed grounds, the principle of "user pays" is appropriate.

Community based clubs, with limited ability to attract sponsorship or "outside" money, should contribute to the costs of maintenance and development of the facility. However Local government authorities, with State and Federal government assistance, should control and finance the grounds as a community service.

Administrators of Community recreation parks, that have playing fields superimpose on them, have problems of maintaining the area to meet the needs of two different users, the sporting clubs and the general community. The general community, through rate payments, make a contribution to the maintenance of the park. One might argue that members of junior clubs also are ratepayers [However this may not necessarily be true, especially if a competition covers more than one local government authority]. The exclusivity of the sports use suggests some payment for this privilege is appropriate.

In planning new housing developments it is essential that regulations are more specific than a ratio of open space to housing and commercial development. Given the nature of the development appropriate facility needs for sports specific, dual usage and passive recreation must be incorporated in the plan.

The cost of such recreation facilities should be met by the authorities managing the development, be it public or private.

### 3. Environmental Concerns Associated With Sportsground Management

While there might be some issues associated with the compatibility of sporting fields and local flora and fauna the significant environmental concerns are associated with people.

It is not reasonable to continue to increase usage of existing facilities especially those in residential areas.

The degradation of the facility itself is significant. The impact on residents is another. One of the major issues is the development of floodlighting of parks in close proximity to residences.

### 4. Effectiveness Of Current Administration Of Sportsgrounds By Various Providers Including Councils, State Government [Including Schools] And Private Operators

Statutory agencies, schools and local government authorities, in general have appropriate strategies in place to effectively manage sportsgrounds. The one area where there needs to be better administrative structures is where local councils grant specific sporting clubs license to use public parkland where playing fields are superimposed. Councils often delegate responsibility to the clubs for the supervision and maintenance of the parkland. Such delegation, leads to a belief that the clubs "own" the grounds and can impose their conditions on availability and use by the residents and general public.

### 5. Impact On Health Outcomes And Social Cohesion, Particularly In Disadvantaged Communities.

I am not competent to comment on this aspect

### 6. Traffic, Noise And Other Direct Impacts On Residential Amenity

The increase in night sport at major grounds have had an effect on the lifestyle of nearby residents. The illumination of the area, the increased traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular is significant.

However the most significant negative impact on the quality of life of residents occurs at suburban parks that are used for junior sport. The over demand for use, traffic congestion, noise, the rubbish left in the streets, the development of training lights etc. has often created serious friction between club officials and residents.

In many instances streets are over parked for most of the Saturday and Sunday when competitions are played and most week afternoons and nights, to a lesser degree, for training.

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

"Duty of Care" exists in all situations. Laws requiring disabled access have created significant problems for all public facility managers.

One of the most significant problems facing sporting ground managers occurs where there is dichotomous usages. The need to meet a "duty of Care" for all users is vital.

The most common problem is the provision of watering systems for parkland playing fields.

Systems that cater for the general upkeep of the park when placed on the actual playing area become a safety factor. Inappropriate or damaged sprinkler heads become a serious safety factor for the participants.

The provision of temporary facilities on park grounds is also a factor. Crowd control ropes, temporary seating etc. have the potential to create safety issues.

#### 8. Access to open space for active and passive recreation.

If we are to be a healthy country it is imperative that sufficient recreational facilities are available. The nature of such facilities may need research. The demographics suggest that facilities for older people need to be developed. It is interesting to note that the once traditional "older peoples" sport Bowls is declining. Bowling Clubs are closing, i.e. Eight clubs in the St. George area have closed in the last several years, others have had to reduce their playing rinks.

The increase in community junior sport [school age] and the demise of competitive school sport may need to be reviewed with a view to a combined approach to children's' sport. Such an approach may better use community and school resources.

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8,8,2006

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**WILFRID.W. EWENS**

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS: BA.[UNE], MEd.[Syd], PhD.[Oregon]  
DipPE.[SydTC].

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS. - Teachers Certificate [NSW Dept. Ed.]  
- Fellow Australian Council for Health, Physical Education  
and Recreation.  
- Level 3[International] Coaching Certificate, Cricket  
- Certificated official, Cricket, Tennis, Rugby, Rugby  
League.

AWARDS: Fellow, ACHPER.  
Recognition Badge, The Commonwealth Council  
Distinguished Coaching Award, NSWCA.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE.

- School Administration [especially Supervision]
- School Health and Physical Education
- Teaching Methodology
- Motor Performance/ Skill acquisition
- Sports Administration,
- Safety in Sport.
- Coach Education
- Playing Field and Sports Facility Development
- Community Recreation
- Exercise, Health and Fitness
- Recreation and Leisure

PRESENT POSITION: Education & Sports Science Consultant.

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT.

1990-3	Head,	School Sport and Leisure Studies UNSW.
1984-9	Chairman,	School Sport and Leisure Studies St. George Institute of Education
1982-4	Head,	Health and Physical Education Department. St. George Institute of Education.
1979-81	Director,	Centre for Community Education Alexander Mackie CAE.
1969-78	Head,	Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department. Alexander Mackie CAE
1976-78	Teaching Fellow,	University of Oregon,
1962-68	Lecturer	Bathurst Teachers' College

1958-62 Physical Education & National Fitness Adviser, Department of Education,  
Western Area.

1952-57 Sportsmaster Penrith High School.

#### VISITING APPOINTMENTS.

1986 Guest Lecturer [Series "Goal setting and the Athlete"]  
University of Alberta  
1986 Guest Lecturer[Series Socio/Psychological Issues and Performance"  
University of Calgary.  
1984 Visiting Fellow, [Summer School, Comparative PE]  
University Houston

AFFILIATIONS: Member Australian Rugby Football League  
National Coaching Advisory Council.  
Member Australian Rugby Football League  
National Referees Advisory Council.  
Member Australian Council for Health, Physical  
Education and Recreation.  
Technical member Australian Cricket Board  
Coaching Committee.  
Technical member NSWCA Coaching Panel.  
Member NSW Fitness Advisory Council.  
Director Kogarah Golf Club

#### **MAJOR SPORTING ADMINISTRATION AND COACHING ACTIVITY**

2000 Olympic Games, Supervisor VIP Venue Visitations.  
1992 World Cup Cricket, Liaison Officer, South African and English teams.  
1984-89 National Coach, Canadian Cricket Team.  
1978-90 NSW Cricket Association State Coaching Panel  
1984-88 Australian Cricket Team, Practice Co-ordinator. Sydney  
1978. Commonwealth Games, Edmonton- Media Accreditation supervisor.  
1972/74 President Australian Council for Health Physical education  
& Recreation [NSW Branch].

#### MAJOR CONSULTANCIES

- Plan the development of Recreation Facilities.  
University of Technology, Sydney.  
[Ewens, Elphinston & Treble]
- Develop and implement a Talent Identification Program [4 years].  
Australian Cricket Board.
- Develop a National Training Centre for elite players  
Canadian Cricket Association
- State wide research project "Coaching Qualifications & Accreditation  
Criteria for Athletic Coaches"  
Oregon State Legislature USA
- Coach Accreditation Course Development.  
Australian Cricket Board
- Referee Accreditation Course Development  
Australian Rugby Football League
- Coach Education Course Development  
Australian Rugby Football League
- Coach Education Curricula  
Canadian Cricket Association.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES.

- Member Menzies Foundation Education Committee
- Member Assessment Panels for Commonwealth Institutions  
Accreditation C'ttes for Advanced Education
- Convenor ACHPER{NSW} Professional Development C'ttee
- Consultant to Rothmans Sports Foundation  
Vice President Parramatta D.C.C.
- Foundation President Bathurst Sports Council
- Member St. George Health & Phys.Ed. Committee

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