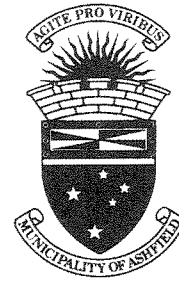


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Ashfield Municipal Council

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14 August 2006

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into Sportground Management in NSW

I refer to your request for submissions to the above inquiry and Ashfield Municipal Council provides the following comments based on the key issues.

Adequacy of provision of quality sportsgrounds to meet community needs across NSW

- Ashfield municipality has only six sportsgrounds
- Demand for the use of these grounds by sporting clubs and organisations are far greater than what Council can supply.
- There are 21 sporting clubs that use Council's sportsgrounds with a membership base that is steadily increasing due to the popularity of sport and the success at the international level (Soccer and Cricket).
- Up to 15 schools also compete to the use of Council's sports fields during school hours.
- Council cannot fully cater for the existing users due to the shortage of available grounds
- Additional sporting users require use of grounds and council cannot supply grounds to meet requests.
- It would appear that there is a lack of collaboration between the sporting codes to assess the availability of sports grounds and the effect this has on the preparation and displacement of other users
- Sporting groups should investigate and promote the use of alternate playing surfaces, such as synthetics that are not as affected by climatic conditions.

Cost and revenue arrangements including capital upgrades

- Council's overall budget is approximately \$25 million and the proportion spent on the entire parks maintenance budget is approximately \$2.7million, which is approximately 5% of Council's overall budget.
- Due to high usage, maintenance costs are high throughout the entire parks system in the Ashfield LGA.
- A copy of Council's fees is attached.
- Council has recently leased one of the major sports grounds to winter and summer use in return for capital investment for improvement to the park.
- Council has aged facilities that have approached the end of their life cycle and are in need of major investment to cater for the increased usage these areas are receiving.
- There has been a lack of financial sinking fund opportunities due to the low rate base to provide sufficient funds to maintain associated buildings that support the field usage.
- Sporting groups are now requesting up to date facilities and/or their governing bodies are placing certain requirements on supporting infrastructure and Council cannot meet these requests financially. Due to the amount of expenditure required for some projects, dollar for dollar grants are not suitable or financially viable for Council.
- Grants and other forms of financial assistance have therefore not been available to the Council under State and Federal programs.

Environmental concerns associated with sportsground management

- The extended drought and water restrictions have limited the quality of the turf grass.
- During the initial period following the water restrictions, ground hardness was a concern for long bone injuries, however this has eased with the current coastal rainfall that Sydney has been experiencing. Should further extended periods of no/low rainfall occur these concerns would come the forefront again.
- Public liability regarding the quality of the playing surface is a concern with the challenge of maintaining a safe playing surface.
- Difficulties arise with pest management. As the turf cover is stressed from over use and climatic conditions it predisposes it to pests and diseases. Whilst Council endeavours to use the principles of integrated pest management, there are times when traditional controls are required. These are difficult to apply due to withholding periods and cultural requirements prior to application and after affecting the use of the field. For example the control of bindii and broadleaf weeds requires no mowing several days before and after treatment to be affective. This affects the users such as cricket that want short grass for a fast outfield.
- Due to sporting codes extending their seasons the change over periods between codes is now less than two weeks. Council is finding it increasingly difficult to undertake the necessary changes (install/remove posts, field markings) in time without any other ground preparations and or repairs.
- Some sporting codes such as soccer are now extending their traditional season and operating on a year round basis. This is compounding issues with the management of the sports field quality and playing capabilities.
- Due to the increased interests in sport and the media coverage at the elite levels, a high expectation of quality of surface has significantly increased. Council is unable to deliver such a surface with the demands placed on their use.

Effectiveness of current administration of sportsgrounds

- There are a number of under utilised school grounds within the LGA that could be made available for use after general school hours for training and weekend sport opportunities. Use of these areas could offset the amount of usage that the public sportsgrounds are currently carrying.
- Due to the high demand, Council is unable to close grounds for any extended maintenance. Any work to the sports fields needs to be timed to coincide with the season changeovers and limited to the two weeks per year.

Impact on health outcomes and social cohesion

- It would appear that the larger sporting clubs are displacing the smaller sporting groups. This has an affect of creating social unrest between groups competing for the limited open space in the Ashfield LGA.
- The perceived need of the larger clubs creates inner quality of clubs with less financial backing/sponsorship and displacement.
- Greater political alignments within clubs are placing additional pressure on local government to provide facilities to their needs.

Traffic, noise and other direct impacts on residential amenity

- Due to greater usage nearby residents are inconvenienced by issues of noise and additional parking requirements. As an increased number of teams are training mid week and playing on the weekend there is greater turnover of people to play and spectators, therefore creating greater traffic movements during the changeovers of games.
- The greater use by sporting clubs has displaced much of the passive recreation use of these areas. There are limited opportunities to just use the open space for passive uses, such as flying a kite with your children.
- Residents adjacent to sportsgrounds are now dealing with year round sports/ training and this is affecting their quality of life. There was a time that the sportsgrounds were only used twice a week for training and on Saturday for games. Due to the lack of availability of grounds this is now a seven-day occurrence.

Affect of litigation and insurance costs on financial viability

- Due to the greater use of sports fields, Council is potentially exposed to a greater risk. To offset this Council performs regular risk assessments to reduce the likelihood of an incident.
- Not only Council but also sporting clubs to ensure compliance and reduce exposure to liability now require greater administrative tasks.
- Casual users are restricted to ten uses without requiring their own public liability insurance
- Complaints from adjacent residents and competing users of these opens spaces is on the rise due to the longer hours of use each sports field receives.
- Unauthorised user of the sports fields is increasing to avoid the costs of hire and avoid the insurance issues.

Access to open space for active and passive recreation users

- There is increasing conflict between the two types of recreation use. Also between organised and unorganised active recreation users competing for the limited open space.
- There is greater pressure to provide more locations for active uses to assist in the obesity issues facing our population.
- Council's limited grounds restrict opportunities for new sports to be introduced within the area and is not catering for all cultures, whether that is nationality or sporting.
- Due to the lack of open space in the LGA there is a limited range of sports offered in council area (Soccer, Rugby, Cricket)
- There is no opportunity to expand open space or sportsgrounds due to the existing residential development.

Should you require any further clarification on any of these matters, please contact Council's Director of Works and Infrastructure Services, Stephen Joannidis on 9716 1988.

Yours faithfully



Ken Gainger
General Manager

TITLE OF FEE/CHARGE	GST Taxable (Y/N)	2006 - 2007 - GST INCLUSIVE FEE
PARKS AND PLAYING FIELDS		
Winter Season		
		Saturdays and Public Holidays
Algie Park	Y	\$1,100.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$550.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports field East	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports field West	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$550.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$1,100.00
Winter Season		Sundays Only
Algie Park	Y	\$1,120.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$560.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports field East	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports field West	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$560.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$1,120.00
Summer Season		Saturdays and Public Holidays
Algie Park	Y	\$1,100.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$550.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports field East	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports field West	Y	\$1,100.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$550.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$1,100.00
NOTE Half day fee to be charged for less than 4 hours (Resolution MM 43/2005)		
Summer Season		Sundays Only
Algie Park	Y	\$1,120.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$560.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports field East	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports field West	Y	\$1,120.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$560.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$1,120.00
NOTE Half day fee to be charged for less than 4 hours (Resolution MM 43/2005)		
Canteen Charge Per Season		
Algie Park	Y	\$550.00
Centenary Sports Field	Y	\$550.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$550.00
Daily Charges For Use of Sporting Fields - Sundays		
Algie Park	Y	\$445.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$225.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$445.00
Centenary Sports Field East	Y	\$445.00
Centenary Sports Field West	Y	\$445.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$225.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$445.00
NOTE Half day fee to be charged for less than 4 hours (Resolution MM 43/2005)		
Daily Charges For Use of Sporting Fields - Monday - Saturday		
Algie Park	Y	\$345.00
Algie Park "Mini" Field	Y	\$175.00
Ashfield Park	Y	\$345.00
Centenary Sports Field East	Y	\$345.00
Centenary Sports Field West	Y	\$345.00
Centenary Sports "Mini" Field	Y	\$345.00
Hammond Park	Y	\$345.00
NOTE Half day fee to be charged for less than 4 hours (Resolution MM 43/2005)		
Training - Playing Fields		
All fields per hour without floodlighting	Y	\$27.00
Per hour per field with floodlighting	Y	\$50.00
Per hour per field with floodlighting with 70% membership inside the Council area (conditions apply)	Y	\$30.00
Casual Bookings Except PRATTEN PARK (these fees include a casual user insurance)		
Casual Use of less than 30 people	Y	Free
General bookings - of over 30 people (includes picnics,weddings,and/or photographs)	Y	\$80.00

Yeo Park Rotunda (a cleaning and key deposit may be required)	Y	\$80.00
Usage of 3-phase power supply (Ashfield Park) - per day or part thereof	Y	\$60.00
Note: Usage of parks either for carnivals or for gatherings > 150 people is subject to Council approval.		
Netball Courts		
Single court use per day	Y	\$80.00
Per court per Season without Floodlighting	Y	\$170.00
Per court per season with floodlighting	Y	\$290.00

Note: Fees marked with * are fees designated by legislation.

**GST Taxable
(Y/N)**

**2006 - 2007 - GST
INCLUSIVE FEE**

TITLE OF FEE/CHARGE

Local Schools (located within Ashfield Municipality) - Monday to Friday Only

* All non-local schools - normal hire rates apply

* If using on Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays or Night Training then normal hire rates apply

Day time use of Playing Field, Cricket Pitch or Netball Court (excluding Pratten Park)	Y	No Charge
Day time use of PRATTEN PARK Playing Field or Cricket Pitch (per day or park)	Y	\$90.00
Day time use of PRATTEN PARK Playing Field or Cricket Pitch Per Season	Y	\$530.00
Athletic Carnivals at Pratten Park (line marking only) PLUS hire/usage fee as above	Y	\$80.00

NOTE Half day fee to be charged for less than 4 hours (Resolution MM 43/2005)

Key Deposit

A key deposit per season or per day is required with full refund on return of the original key to Council within one (1) month of the end of the season or at the end of the day (Can not be paid via credit card) \$100.00

Cleaning Deposit

A cleaning deposit per season or per day may be required to ensure that the areas under use are left in a tidy condition. This deposit or the balance available is refunded at the end of the season or day on written request to Council (Can not be paid via credit card) \$200.00