

**WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL
SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this late submission regarding the above matter. I apologise for the late reply however, I cannot find any record of incoming correspondence from the Committee and have relied on notification by Gosford City Council of the inquiry's existence. Earlier this week I discussed the matter with Ms Carolynne James team in your office and was advised that a late submission was acceptable. This assistance is much appreciated however the submission below is brief due to time constraints.

- Current requirement for updating and refurbishment of sportsgrounds

Sports field provision in Wyong Shire is determined on the basis of need. Council's Open Space and Recreation Unit monitors sports field usage levels through the gathering and collation of data from summer and winter user groups. State and National sports trends are also considered as well as demographic analysis of the Shire's population. This information is then used in the design of new facilities and the upgrade of existing facilities. There is a \$23.5m capital works sportsfield development program underway in the north of the Shire over the next 5 years in response to sustained increase in the Shire's population. The funding for these works is derived from s.94 contributions. In addition to this funding Council uses revenue funds to upgrade existing facilities in terms of lighting, drainage and irrigation. There are 35 turf sports field facilities located across the Shire, many of which are used for more than 25 hours per week. Council considers that sports field use of greater than 25 hours per week has a detrimental effect on turf performance.

- Appropriate and fairness of Council pricing principles for facilities

Council seeks to recover 15% of the actual cost of sports field maintenance when determining user fees and charges. These fees and charges are set out in Council's 2006/07 Management Plan and are reviewed annually. This fee level is considered appropriate and equitable in what is a price sensitive community.

- Environmental issues including water conservation and grounds maintenance

This Council faces significant challenges in managing sports fields under the current level of water restrictions. All new facilities are designed to be self sufficient in water use through the inclusion of water harvesting systems using stormwater, ground water or recycled effluent. Existing sports fields are being retro-fitted with these same technologies where appropriate. Eight out of 36 sports fields now have water supplies other than potable water. This figure will increase over the next 5 years. Funding for these works is being provided internally. The selection and application of soil improvement materials is monitored for potential environmental impacts and water management plans are being prepared for all sports fields. No viable energy alternatives have yet been identified for the delivery of sports field lighting at the local level. Amenities buildings are being retro-fitted with alternative water supplies for toilet flushing and showering. Waste disposal is by means of deposition to landfill.

- Residential amenity, public liability and security issues

All sports field facilities are designed with residential amenity and security in mind. Wherever possible Safer by Design principles are adopted and facilities are designed in consultation with users, neighbours and relevant State government agencies. Turf maintenance practices seek to minimise the risk of player injury however on average Council would receive one claim for sports field injuries per calendar year.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Rhodes

Manager

Open Space and Recreation

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