

**Submission
No 134**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Cooks River Titans Football Club

Date received: 23 July 2016

The Cooks River Titans Football Club was formed in 2014. In 2016 the Club already has 21 teams with nearly 300 players ranging from Under6s to Over35s.

The Club currently plays out of Gough Whitlam Park and two fields at Beaman Park, but for the last 2 years the Club has been campaigning local, state and federal governments to gain access to unused areas of Waterworth Park which is just across the road from Gough Whitlam Park.

Gough Whitlam Park and Waterworth Park are predominantly Crown Land.

The home ground at Gough Whitlam Park has no canteen. It also has no lights so all of our 300 players are forced to train on Beaman Park. The fields at Beaman Park are wedged in between two much larger club Hurlstone Park Wanderers and Earlwood Wanderers. At Beaman Park there are no amenities nor canteen. So when the junior teams train on a cold winter night and kids or parents need to use the toilet, they need to go 200 metres away sometimes in the darkness to the amenities used by Hurlstone Park.

The need for additional grounds at Waterworth Park is so the Club can vacate Beaman Park as they want to be based in the bottom corner of Earlwood/Undercliffe near Tempe. We don't want to be squeezed between two large existing clubs and don't want to have issues with other clubs. We want a proper home and not to be carrying equipment every week night and weekend from Gough Whitlam Park to Beaman Park.

The Titans are made up of purely volunteers to provide sport for the youth in our community which is a huge benefit to society. We put together a proposal which also consulted with NSW Touch, Wollie Creek Preservation Society, Dulwich Hill Cycling Club, Ultimate Frisbee and has included additional areas for other sports such as Netball and Volleyball. Undercliffe Public School has not one blade of grass on their school grounds and additional fields at Waterworth Park can be used by the school for school sport as well as after hours training. We have letters of support from Undercliffe Public School, Special Olympics NSW, Canterbury Bulldogs Rugby League as well as state and federal politicians.

The Cooks River Titans as well as the other environmental and community groups have constantly been knocked back by Canterbury City Council who were pushing to have Archery on the grounds instead. One of the Councillors has a nephew who is an avid archer. There were also rumours that the long term plan was to develop the area into medium density housing (towers of unit blocks) due to its proximity to the train station. We heard this first hand by a real estate agent/developer who had very close ties with the majority of Councillors who had formed a voting block.

We have sent letters to state and federal politicians including the Premier, the State Minister for Sport, the State Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water and Greens MP David Shoebridge.

Canterbury Council earlier this year conducted surveys and acquired consultants to put together a Plan of Management for the current and future uses of both Gough Whitlam Park and Waterworth Park. The Plan of Management was supposed to be released in May earlier this year but nothing has been published to date.

In June, Canterbury Council was forced to merge with Bankstown Council. All Councillors have been removed. This includes both good Councillors and bad Councillors. While there is a lot of reorganisation happening within the new Council, the Cooks River Titans remain as resolute as

ever to push for new fields on Waterworth Park. They are still lobbying all levels of government to protect these parks for the community.

The Waterworth Park/Gough Whitlam Park precinct should become a multi-sport and community use facility which are becoming increasingly rare in the inner city of Sydney. Parkland whether it be for active or passive use is critical to the future development of our younger generations. This beautiful and picturesque park remains as a parcel of Crown Land which can be used by sport and recreation for the greater community and not for the self interests of certain individuals.

Attached is our original proposal we submitted last year but was not even put on the table by the General Manager at Canterbury Council. The proposal was consistently knocked back for consideration as it would protect the parks against possible development.