



## **DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICE'S REPORT**

9<sup>th</sup> August 2005

<b>DSS7      SPORTING FIELDS USER GROUP AND STATUS REVIEW FILE: 447</b>
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### **SUMMARY:**

Reporting on the review of Sporting Field User Groups



In September, Councillor McWilliams and Sowter were appointed delegates for a review of Sports User Groups. Meetings were organised with each User Group and their requirements of Council and Council's requirements of them.

An investigation of user group effectiveness in Council's sporting fields and associated amenities has been carried out.

An effective, well-informed User Group, appointed as a Section 355 Committee can substantially reduce the time spent by Council staff dealing with complaints and requests for additional services on sporting fields by negotiating with users in the first instance, and coordinating requests for unprogrammed services on the fields they take responsibility for.

They can provide a more complete picture of the sometimes conflicting needs of individual associations making requests for capital improvements and assist Council in making appropriate and consistent decisions on expenditure across the Shire.

They can provide information and local knowledge for applications for grant funding that can increase the potential for successful grant applications.

Currently the full benefits of effective 355 Committees is not being realised.

The aim of the investigation (outlined in 26<sup>th</sup> April 2005 Resolution) is to identify alternative means of reducing operating costs for sporting fields and encouraging User Groups to communicate with each

individual sports association regarding field improvements and to share the costs with Council.

Methods to achieve this aim include:

- re-introduction of the SPORTING FACILITIES SERVICE CHARTER to clarify Council and regular user responsibilities
- informing existing and new 355 Committees of the Guidelines attached to this role and advising regular users to communicate with the relevant User Group in the first instance
- developing a monthly or quarterly sporting newsletter to keep user groups and 355 Committees up to date on what is happening in Shire Sport.
- Encouraging all users of sporting fields to book usage in the Council's Sporting Diary
- re-introduction of certain fees and charges, with the potential for Clubs or 355 Committees to off set some charges by performing tasks themselves and ensuring fees and charges are attributed consistently
- introduction of penalties to cover additional costs of litter collection, cleaning, and ground repairs on or around fields resulting from the actions of users.

There is currently no charge to regular users of sporting fields or to School groups, whether regular or casual users.

It appears that the Sporting Diary does not reflect actual bookings and usage of sporting fields. This affects the accuracy of usage data.

## **South West Rocks**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve. Stable and active User Group committee. Increasing usage. SWR Sports Association is the appointed 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** toilets, change rooms, kiosk/canteen, storage, lighting, irrigation.

Summer Season – Little Athletics, Cricket, Golden Oldies Rugby Union, School sport

Winter Season – Soccer, Rugby Union, Golden Oldies Rugby Union, School sport.

The South West Rocks Oval grass cutting is carried out by the SWR Country Club staff, using their own equipment. KSC is responsible for the maintenance of the area between the car park and the oval, weekly litter collection, seasonal line marking, installation and removal of goalposts, weed control and fertilising so cost to Council is relatively low.

Development of the Boyters Lane Playing Fields remains a viable option with strong support from the sporting community. Concerns have been raised regarding Council's capacity to maintain the new fields once they are established, but this should be possible from within Council's maintenance votes.

## **Gladstone Fields**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, new committee, increased teams, Gladstone Sports Association is the 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** toilets (basic) and storage, no change rooms, no canteen, floodlighting.

Summer Season – Soccer, Jnr Rugby League

Winter Season – Soccer, Touch Football, Smithtown Junior Rugby League trains.

Potential to utilise the Smithtown Tennis Club building, relocated to Gladstone Fields, for use as a Canteen.

\$7,000 funds currently available. Issues with flood heights and fill have not been resolved.

## **Smithtown Oval**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, stable and active committee, stable usage. Propose Smithtown Junior Rugby League as 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** toilets, change rooms, Kiosk, canteen, storage, lighting.

Summer Season – Touch Football

Winter Season – Junior Rugby League, Touch Football, Soccer

Grandstand repairs completed end of last Financial Year \$17,000.

## **Crescent Head Fields**

### **Baker Drive Fields**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve. Informal and ineffective User Group Committee. Low usage. No proposal to retain 355 Committee, each Sports Group to liaise directly with Council.

**Amenities:** toilets, no change rooms, no canteen, Centennial Pavilion with electric BBQs, lighting, irrigation.

Summer Season – Cricket, Touch Football

Winter Season – Junior Soccer, Senior Soccer (new team), Touch Football

Request to install cricket nets \$5,000 but funds have not yet been utilised by local cricket association.

## **Birralee Oval**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, under minimal maintenance regime. Each Sports Group to liaise directly with Council.

**Amenities :** nil

Summer Season – nil

Winter Season – Soccer training 4 hrs/week

In process to negotiate a MOU with Crescent Head Roos Rugby League Football Club for this to become their home ground. The Club has offered to pay for goalposts, levelling the field if required and maintaining it after an initial cut by KSC.

## **Upper Macleay Sports Fields**

**Current Status:** Council land, stable and active User Group committee, slightly increasing patronage. Propose Upper Macleay Sports Association be retained as 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** toilet block at rodeo Ground, no canteen, shipping containers as storage/canteen, lighting, irrigation.

Summer Season – Little Athletics, Cricket

Winter Season – Soccer, School sport

Funding for two additional floodlights was recently approved. A request for drainage work, upgrade of sewage system to accommodate at least four more toilets and two more showers, Amenities block (Sports Association have offered to pay the DA fees), shade/shelter/bench/BBQ seating at current Canteen area, fencing around the sports ground, and top dressing of the field in August/September has been requested.

## Stuarts Point Fields

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, active User Group committee, variable patronage, regular school usage. Propose Stuarts Point User Group as 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** toilets, change rooms, canteen, separate storage, floodlighting, irrigation, discus/shot putt cage.

Summer Season – Little Athletics, Cricket, Soccer training, School

Winter Season – Netball, School, Soccer

Recent funding made available to convert BBQ shelter to storage \$441.00, and to install security fencing \$5,500.00 (in progress, as User Group is supplying labour).

Request for assistance to survey boundaries, as they are seeking grant funding to install exercise stations around the perimeter of the field. Request to replace old bubblers outside amenities block and to extend awning over canteen.

## Frederickton Sports Fields

**Current Status:** Council land, new enthusiastic committee on Frederickton Sports Association, stable teams. Frederickton Sports Association proposed as 355 Committee for the Sporting Fields and Tennis Courts. (Tennis Club committee in recess for 2 Yrs)

**Amenities:** toilets, change rooms, canteen, storage, irrigation points.

Summer Season - Cricket

Winter Season – Soccer, Netball

Funding available for training lights \$6,200.00, repairs undertaken to retaining wall, additions to log post and rail fencing to prevent vehicular access, seating around netball courts installed, funding of \$1,000 made available for tables pending more information on placement.

## South Kempsey Oval

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, no committee, stable patronage, propose the Macleay Valley Cricket Association be appointed as 355 Committee.

**Amenities:** nothing close to the Oval, shipping container used as storage shed, water point on field, no lights.

Summer Season – Cricket, School sport

Winter Season – School sport

The Association has installed a turf wicket and have plans to laser level it prior to the season commencing. The MVCA maintains the wicket.

Request for assistance to top dress and seed bare patches, use of Council equipment and operator to build up extension at south west corner for practice nets, dig holes to extend sight screens, clear under scrub along southern boundary.

Plans have been submitted by MVCA to build an amenities block on the western perimeter behind the Memorial Grove. There is no funding available at this time.

## **Verge Street Stadium/Verge Street 2 & 3**

**Current Status:** Crown Reserve, no committee, interaction between users tense. Each sport to negotiate directly with Council.

Kempsey Junior Rugby League has no formal agreement with Council regarding their amenities block.

**Amenities:** toilets, change rooms, canteen, storage, lights, irrigation, Grandstand.

Summer Season – Verge 2 Cricket, School sport, Touch Football

Winter Season – Rugby League, Junior Rugby League, Rugby Union, School sport

Vandalism of the Verge Street amenities is frequent and expensive.

\$5,000 to replace hot water service incurred June 2005.

Require second amenities block between Verge 1 & 2.

## **Eden Street Fields/ Athletics Field**

**Current Status:** Council land, no committee, high usage, each sport to negotiate directly with Council.

**Amenities:** toilets, Netball canteen, Cricket nets, lighting at Eden 3 & 4

Summer – Cricket (Junior & Senior), School Sport

Winter – Hockey (Junior & Senior)

The materials have been purchased for the cricket nets at Verge St Oval. MVCA is to contribute the labour to erect them – the project is pending completion.

## **Services Clubs Park**

**Current Status:** Council land, propose Kempsey Little Athletics Centre as the 355 Committee

**Amenities:** toilets, change room, kiosk, irrigation points, no floodlighting

Summer: Little Athletics, occasional overflow Cricket

Winter: Schools, Athletics,

Request from KLAC to install an extended long jump on eastern side of field requires negotiation with MV Cricket Association.

\$14,566 Sect 94 funds provided for canteen.

KLAC plans to host the Zone Championships in December 2006 and has requested assistance to improve the field prior to the event.

## **Kemp Street Fields**

**Current Status:** Council lands, heavy usage. Retain Kemp Street Sports Association as 355 Committee

**Amenities:** Toilets, change rooms, canteen at Soccer field end, storage, lighting, irrigation

Summer: Softball, Cricket, School Sport, cricket training

Winter: Soccer, Baseball, School Sport

Kempsey Hornets Soccer Club has submitted a Letter of Intention for field development that is the subject of a separate report.

Kempsey Hornets Soccer Club has also requested urgent improvements to Kemp St 1 field and lights installed for Kemp St 2

Funds available to top dress Soccer Field 1 \$12,099

Funds available for baseball field development \$904

Sect 94 funds for showers upgrade \$5,000 and seating \$5,466.

Request to build second Amenities block in North East corner for baseball and increase lighting.

On the weekend of 23 & 24 July 2005 Under 19's State Softball Championships were held there and compliments received on the condition of the fields.

## **Dangar St or Rangers Fields**

**Current Status:** Council lands

**Amenities:** Rangers Clubhouse, lighting, irrigation points, Kemp St amenities block

Summer: Soccer training

Winter: Soccer

Efforts to put in place a formal lease agreement with the Macleay Valley Rangers Soccer Club have been unsuccessful. Propose a Memorandum of Understanding. An expression of interest from the MV Rangers to develop a second field and build an amenities block is awaiting concept plans from the Club.

### ***REPORT IMPLICATIONS:***

- ***Environmental***

***There are no environmental implications from this report.***

- ***Social***

***Sport and Sporting clubs play a significant role in encouraging people to keep healthy and active as well as contributing positively to the lifestyles of our youth and economically disadvantaged community members.***

- ***Economic (Financial)***

*The aim of the review is to identify opportunities to reduce Council's operating expenses for sporting fields. A decline in the condition or quality of amenities of certain sporting fields may discourage high profile sporting event coordinators from looking at Kempsey Shire as a place to hold events. These events have historically generated income to the Shire*

*All Maintenance and Capital improvement works will be covered by the votes provided by Council.*

- *Policy or Statutory*

*Council has an obligation to maintain and be the caretaker of public land and ensure the areas are appropriately maintained.*

- *Director's Review*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the South West Rocks Sports Association continue as the 355 Committee for the SWR Sporting Fields.
2. That the Gladstone Sports Association continue as the 355 Committee for the Gladstone Sporting Fields.
3. That the clubhouse from Smithtown Tennis Club be allocated to Gladstone Sports Association for use as a canteen.
4. That the Smithtown Junior Rugby League Club be appointed a 355 Committee for the Smithtown Sporting Fields.
5. That a Memorandum of Understanding be negotiated with the Crescent Head Roos Rugby League Football Club regarding the use and maintenance of Birralee Oval.
6. That the Upper Macleay Sports Association continue as the a 355 Committee for the Upper Macleay Sporting Fields.
7. That the Stuarts Point User Group continue as the 355 Committee for the Stuarts Point Sporting Fields.
8. That the Frederickton Sports Association be appointed as the 355 Committee for the Frederickton Sporting Fields and Tennis Courts.
9. That the Macleay Valley Cricket Association be appointed as the 355 Committee for the South Kempsey Oval.

10. That Council negotiate a formal agreement with the Kempsey Junior Rugby League Club regarding the Junior League building.
11. That the Kempsey Little Athletics Centre be appointed as the 355 Committee for Services Club Park.
12. That the Kemp Street User Group continue as the 355 Committee for the Kemp Street Sporting Fields.
13. That a Memorandum of Understanding be negotiated with the Macleay Valley Rangers Soccer Club regarding the use and maintenance of the Dangar St Fields.
14. That the Crescent Head User Group, the Verge Street User Group and the Eden St User Group 355 Committees be revoked.

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**K J Finnie**  
**DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES**