



LEEMING SPORTS ASSOCIATION (INC.)

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— John Connell Reserve —

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Written Submission – Leeming Sports Association

Item; T22/3978 – John Connell Reserve Oval Extension

Attention: Mayor George Gear & City of Melville Councillors

Monday 20th June 2022

As advised by City of Melville that a verbal Deputation with a Power Point presentation cannot be presented to Ordinary Meeting of Council 21 June 2022, as directed and on behalf of the Leeming Sporting Association (LSA), I make a written submission concerning Item T22/38978-John Connell Oval Extension.

The Leeming Sports Association (LSA):

The Leeming Sports Association was founded in 1986 as a managing body for the home ground and facility of three clubs, the Leeming Spartan Cricket Club (founded 1918), the Leeming Bowls Club and the Leeming Strikers Soccer Club.

The LSA operates under a constitution and maintains and oversees the John Connell complex (including change rooms) for 365 days of the year.

Through the Clubs the LSA has an overall playing and non-playing total membership of approximately 1800 people, and a far greater reach in the south-eastern area of the City.

Mission Statement:

To develop and support growth and inclusiveness of Junior Girls and Boys, Senior Females, Diverse Disabled, Integrated and Culturally diverse people within the Clubs, allowing everyone to participate together and build better relationships.

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To proudly foster and develop community growth and engagement, resulting in the formation of lifelong memories and friendships.

Enable everyone to have the opportunity to be part of a supportive and safe sporting environment by utilising the same facilities and participating all together.

Project Overview:

Phase 1: Obtain funding and renovate change rooms to incorporate females, those with physical disabilities, our junior male and female players, their parents, and spectators with babies – *this is currently underway with completion in February 2023*

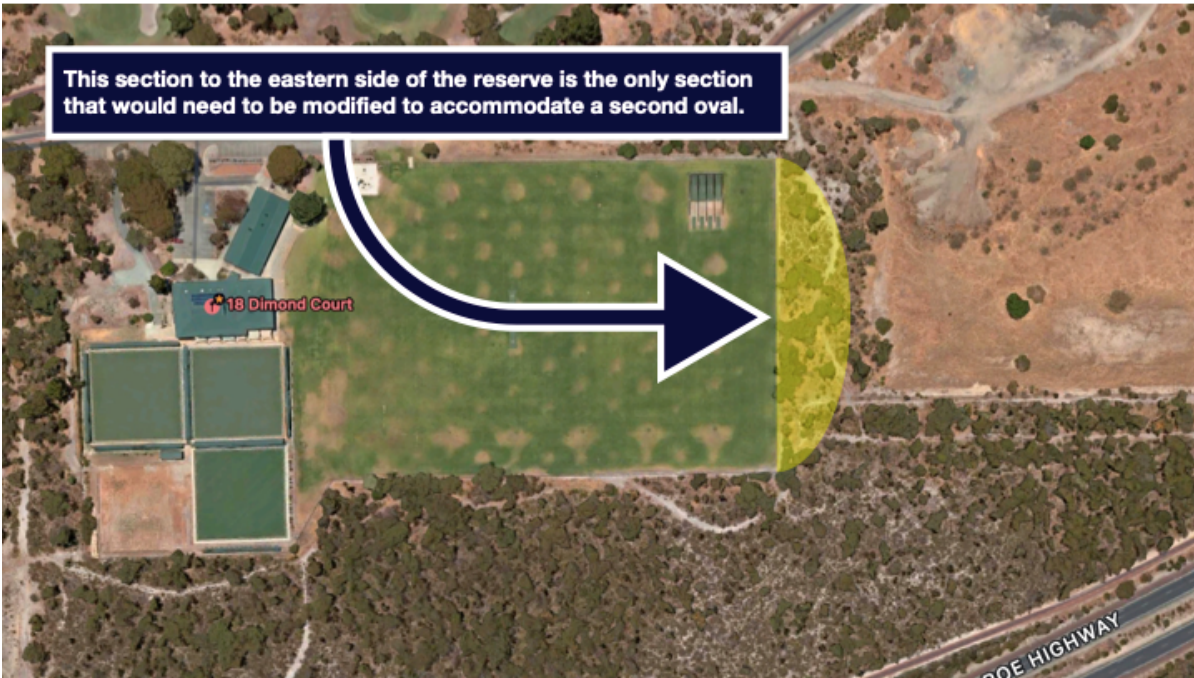


Phase 2: Obtain funding, relocate, and construct new cricket practice nets in line with required safety standards – *currently underway for completion in early December 2023*

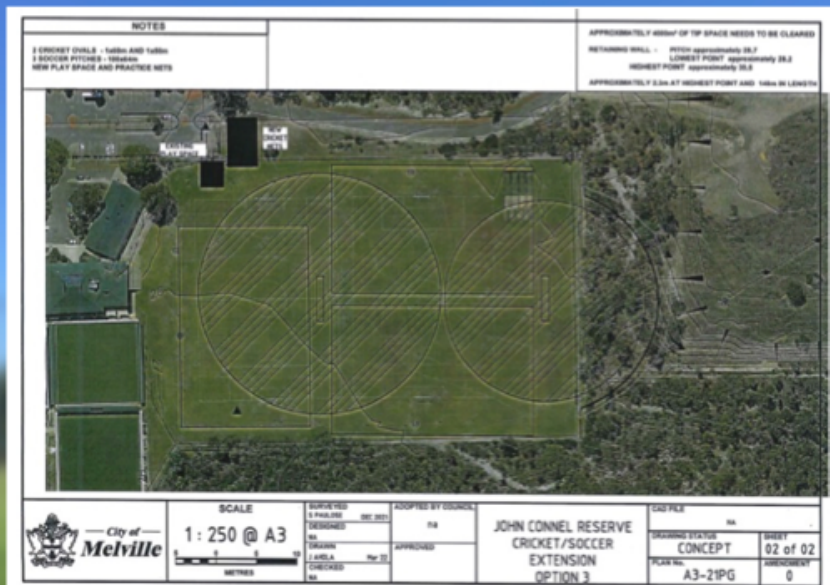


Phase 3: To extend the John Connell Reserve's eastern side to increase the reserve and accommodate four soccer pitches and two cricket ovals – *application is currently at permit stage pending Council approval*

This section to the eastern side of the reserve is the only section that would need to be modified to accommodate a second oval.



Two Ovals Proposal



Marked plans highlighting how the extension would allow for two cricket ovals and four soccer pitches.

Phase 4: Replant the completely degraded bushland to the immediate north to further support the Carnaby Cockatoo – *this being dependent on the outcome of Phase 3*

Independent Threatened Ecological Community Assessment

In September and November 2020, after meetings between the LSA and the City of Melville (CoM), the City commissioned two independent threatened ecological community assessment to be conducted by Natural Area Consulting Management Services.

Assessment One was the area on the Eastern fence line of John Connell Oval and subject to this application. **The second assessment was to the South of John Connell Oval and not subjected to this application.**



The Diagram on the left outlines the area that was assessed and the diagram to right shows the area in red that is to be cleared.

The findings of the assessment subject to this application were as follows:

- **The Executive Summary at page 3, outlines the findings of those surveys. The survey found, with regard to “the detailed flora and vegetation” that “no priority or threatened flora species, or ecological communities were found”. With regard to “the basic fauna survey, no conservation significant fauna species were recorded”.**
- Further, “the outcomes of the assessment activities carried out, suggest that impacts associated with development are likely **low**, with the area for the Carnaby’s food source not meeting size and condition criteria for referral. The proposed clearing area is not at variance with any of the ten clearing principles, and ecological impact to the area is likely to be minimal”.
- Section 4.2.1., “On-Ground Flora Survey” at page 16 of the report, the Survey found “No threatened or priority flora species were found”.

- Section 4.2.3., titled Threatened Ecological Community Assessment (TEC) at page 18, the Survey found that “no dominant species associated with the Tuart Woodlands or the subtropical and temperate coastal Saltmarsh community were present on site. Further, “due to the low similarity and most of them being weed species on sit, Natural Area does not consider the area to be part of this TEC”.
- Section 4.2.4., “Vegetation Condition” at page 19 advises that the Survey found that the “vegetation condition ranged from Completely Degraded to Good within the survey area, with the Majority (75.86%) of the site either Degraded or Completely Degraded”. The survey found that only 1.98% of this area was classed as being ‘very good’ or higher. Figure 1 at page 20 outlines the graded areas.
- With regards to the Fauna Survey Results, Section 6.2 “Significant Flora” at page 24, the Survey found that “no threatened or priority species were recorded. Due to the small size of the area and poor quality of the understorey present it is unlikely that any potential priority or threatened flora species listed in Table 4 exist within the site”.
- Moreover, in Section 6.3, “Threatened Ecological Communities” (TEC) on page 24, the Survey found “no threatened ecological communities were recorded on site. The Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh and Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain Ecological communities were ruled out due to lack of dominant species or habitat present for these communities.
- In a regional context, the proposed clearing area is adjacent to a TEC, Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain which was determined through a survey conducted by Natural Area” and that “due to poor condition and the small patch of the survey area and the species present, the proposed clearing area does not meet the criteria to be considered part of the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain TEC”.
- Section 6.4, “Fauna Survey” at page 24, the Survey found “no conservation significant fauna species were recorded within the area of the survey. Although, signs of feeding by threatened Carnaby’s Cockatoo was noted so the area is likely to be utilised as a transient feeding site for this species in conjunction with the larger nearby bushland area of the remaining John Connell Reserve and Ken Hurst Park, which have the same food sources. The nature of the survey site is relatively small and between other vegetated areas”
- Section 6.5, “Black Cockatoos” at page 25, the Survey found “although the area is considered a good quality feeding habitat for the black cockatoos, the proposed area to be cleared is less than the 1-hectare trigger value for the EPA referral guidelines for the three threatened black cockatoos”. The report further details that no nesting habitat was observed on site and no black cockatoos were sighted.
- Section 6.6, “Assessment of Impacts” at page 25, the Survey found “the outcomes of the assessment activities carried out by Natural Area suggest that the impacts associated with development are likely to be low, with the area for the Carnaby’s food source not meeting size and condition criteria for referral.”
- Section 6.7, “Assessment Against Clearing Principles” at page 25, the Survey found “that the clearing application is not at variance with any of the ten clearing principles” (further referenced in table 8 on page 26). Significantly, as the proposed clearing area is 0.917 hectares, and the majority of the site is Completely Degraded and Degraded condition is not considered to be required for referral”.

Please note that no bushland classed as 'excellent' will be cleared, only the area marked red in above diagram. Furthermore, the area of the old tip will not be disturbed.

The area we are seeking to clear is not a threatened ecological community or in breach of any of the 10 Clearing Principles.

The development of the small area will provide a doubling of playing fields in both Cricket and Soccer thereby providing positive outcomes for male and female youth and those with disabilities.

The demand for this development in support of our community is absolutely critical, given the lack of playing fields. The City has previously (Feb 2021) identified John Connell as one of only two reserves within the City able to be expanded.

Financial support of \$650,000.00 has been obtained from the Federal Government.

Agreements Made

The issue of the oval extension has been afoot since 1993.

Over last six years, numerous meetings and agreements at Senior levels between the LSA and the CoM have been conducted and reached.

The latest agreements concerning this application and oval extension were made at meetings attended by Mayor Gear, Councillor Clive Robartson, CEO Marten Tieleman, Mick McCarthy, Todd Cahoon, Mick Doyle from the City of Melville, Hon Ben Morton MP, Federal Member for Tangney, Dr. Jags Krishnan MLA, Member for Riverton, and Mr. Yaz Mubarakai MLA, Member for Jandakot, along with the three Presidents and Executive from the three sporting clubs of the LSA.

These meetings and agreements were conducted at the John Connell club rooms in Leeming between September 2020 and January 2021. It was agreed to; prepare and submit to DWER the "Application for new permit or referral to clear vegetation", commission the independent threatened ecological community assessment of the area of extension, survey and map in detail the area of extension, proceed with the change room renovations (including getting the club to draft up a floor plan and approvals for the clubs to relocate), fund and construct new practise nets, and for the clubs to fund and construct, with the CoM, the oval extension area.

Conclusion

The need for this oval extension is real and critical to the current and future development of both Junior and Senior female involvement in sport. It is also very crucial to the development and inclusion of both male and female persons with disabilities and cultural differences.

We are all aware of the enormous growth in young females want to be involved in sport. We are also all aware of the benefits that sport and outdoor activities has on the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing along with human development and providing a safe, vibrant, and attractive community.

The problems of drugs, alcohol, bullies, computers, obesity, and suicides within our youth are also well known. Whilst we have had many success stories over the years, unfortunately, our club has felt the effects of depression and suicide.

Due to the lack of playing fields and proper facilities in change rooms and toilets etc within the area, the clubs have had to turn children away, in particular young girls and women. Over the last 15 years this has resulted in the loss of a generation of young people. To delay this extension further and wait for a second version of a John Connell Master Plan will result in the current and future loss of the generations of young people.

Simply put, in the current environment, we as a club need to provide proper facilities and a safe club environment to encourage young teenaged girls and boys and even younger children from ages 5 to 12 years, along with their parents, to participate and get involved in club sport. Too many times the girl or boy is lost due to facilities and playing fields not being available.

What is also equally important to the process is not only the young people participating in the sport, but also training together and engaging in the sporting club's club life, building lifelong friendships, role models, employment opportunities, personal skill development, and more. To have playing fields spread out over several locations and in different local councils also seriously affects the benefits to be obtained from Club life. It also deters parents who need to transport and supervise their children of different aged group teams to various spread-out locations and then must deal with the issue of lack of or seriously outdated open male toilets, showers and changerooms.

Our clubs have sat and worked through the process of other options on many occasions and over a number of years, as to turn young people away is not a pleasant experience, however, have thus far failed to identify or implement any other meaningful plan other than the extension of the current oval.

We as a sporting group have successfully obtained from the Federal Government a grant of \$650,000.00 towards the cost of the ground development.

Following verbal confirmation in December 2021 advising us that we could proceed in making the application to DWER for the "new permit or referral to clear native vegetation" for the 0.6 hectares under request, advice was received from the Federal Government that due to the size of land under request, referral to the Federal Government was not required.

Inquiries were also made with DWER, and whilst not being absolute until they receive the application and process it, it was possible that it would fall under the "Exempt" category and not require a permit.

We again request approval to make application to DWER for a "new permit or referral to clear native vegetation". We ask you to let the proper process proceed immediately and any further development regarding the clearing of the land stated will depend on their decision.

If the clearing is successful, we would then come together with the City of Melville and work with combined resources to develop the project further.