

Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup – the VC Mitchell Sporting Precinct

Background

In late 2018, the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup received \$12,000 through CSRFF to compile a Master Plan for the Donnybrook Sporting and Recreation Precinct. This process involved the engagement of an independent consultant to undertake community consultation which consisted of:

- Community survey (online and hard copy).
- Community open door session.
- User Group/Club Survey – Direct survey; and
- A working group was formed consisting of Elected Members, Shire staff and members from the key stakeholder groups that met regularly and visited various similar sport, recreation and event facilities.

Key findings that were identified through the consultation process;

CO-LOCATION/SHARED USE	PAVILION / CHANGE ROOMS	OTHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared facilities with all clubs in one area • Shared use of facilities • Colocation of other sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football/Tennis Club facility upgrade • Improved change rooms for football • Female friendly change rooms • Better away team change rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved playground • More diverse activities for children • Oval lighting • Improved car parking • Improved path network • Car park lighting
RECREATION CENTRE	NETBALL/HOCKEY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Opening Hours • Swimming Pool change room improvements • Gym and/or gym equipment improvements • More classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate netball to this location • Relocate hockey to this location if possible 	

Extract from Master Plan – ABV Consultancy

The Master Plan clearly highlighted a two staged process based on funding availability.

It was from here that the key findings of the Master Plan were put forward to the State Government by the Shire for funding under the WA Recovery Plan and received \$6 million - one of only 14 projects in the Sport and Recreation sector.

Funding Situation

It has been made quite clear that the intent of the funding must be on co-location of sports where possible and provision of multi-sport / multi-use. Funding is not for what would be deemed maintenance or general upgrades of existing facilities.

It is imperative that the long-term status of facilities is considered, should consideration be given to using some of the available funds on upgrading existing facilities.

1. How long does the Shire have to spend the remaining funding?

There is no specific deadline, however the funding was allocated as part of the States "WA Recovery Plan", which assumes that a project will be completed within a reasonable timeframe as part of the economic stimulus aimed at supporting the state during the COVID period.

A financial allocation (\$250,000) from the committed project funding and a Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) was entered, to assist the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup to undertake additional planning, design and preparation of tender documentation for the redevelopment of the VC Mitchell Sporting Precinct. Terms of this agreement has been extended to 30 January 2022.

Upon completion of this first agreement, the Shire will then submit a final project for consideration and approval by the Minister to trigger a new FAA for the remaining funds which will be aimed at construction works.

There would be no obligation for the Shire to proceed with the full project, if during the planning stage the Shire discovered something that made the project untenable.

2. Is it possible that the Shire puts in less than 1/3rd?

There is no obligation for the Shire to contribute however the Shire indicated to the previous Minister and publicly stated a commitment of up to \$3m towards the project.

3. Can the funding be spent on the entire "precinct" spread over the entire area from the Rec Centre to the Oval?

Ultimately the funding is to deliver on the key aspects of the masterplan, which incorporates the entire precinct. A key aspect of the masterplan was for a shared facility with all clubs in the one area, shared use of facilities and colocation of sports.

This development could be staged, focusing on priority areas first and looking at other opportunities later.

It is recommended that the priority areas be focused on essential "need" and not aspirational "want".

4. Would it be acceptable to modify the plans to have all the money spent on the sporting facilities spread across the precinct and a lesser amount spent on the "function room"?

The funding is not dictating as to what the project will be. The shire will need to demonstrate that the identified needs of the masterplan and the original expectations of the commitment are being met.

5. Governance models.

Ultimately this is a Council facility and Council decision, but it is suggested identifying 2 or 3 models, highlighting the pro's and con's for each and making a decision based on the majority. Unfortunately, not all may be satisfied, but essentially the options have been considered and a decision made on what suits the majority. An interim model could be used whilst formulating a model that best suits the users.

6. Do the SSA's have any opinions/guidance for their sports here in Donnybrook that you can share?

Most sports have clear standards such as change room specifications for AFL etc. Whilst gaining insight from SSAs, there needs to be a level of clarification that the facilities are for community level need and not focus on one off opportunities.

7. Criteria for this funding

This funding is not based on CSRFF criteria, so it is not comparable, however it should be noted that should the decision be not to proceed, then the only other funding source for sports facilities is through the CSRFF scheme.

This is an annual \$12.5m scheme that offers up to 1/3rd of the total eligible project cost (with a maximum grant of \$2m).

8. Village style development and 'shared/multi-use'.

Ultimately the department is recommending where possible to have multi-sports is preferred as it ensures long term sustainability. It is no longer sustainable to have standalone facilities for singular sports.

As a department we support co-location – relocating sports from a singular use to a shared use option. Making sure facilities are used as often as is practical.

9. Comparing similar projects in other LGs

It is assumed that any design would be based on what is available now and what the shortfall is in meeting existing needs and potential opportunities.

Need to focus on what is the need and not what everyone wants. Many communities have in the past been unrealistic and have ended up with a facility that is beyond their need that costs a fortune to manage and maintain.

In most cases our experience is that communities build facilities that are too big, trying to replicate floor areas of existing facilities and not recognising that modern facility floorplans are more efficient with space than older facilities.

10. Getting the clubs back to the discussion table? Can he help chair a meeting for club reps?

Ultimately this is a shire project and the funding is to modernise facilities. If a sport has had the opportunity to be part of this and decide not to contribute, then I don't think there is much else the shire can do.

If a sport has unrealistic expectations and they do not recognise this then it will be difficult to change their minds and sooner or later the project needs to proceed with or without them.

11. Liquor licences and the flow of revenue from bar sales go to the clubs

With there being three licences existing now on VC Mitchell, it is suggested if there were no licences on VC Mitchell and they all wanted to apply for one today, then there would be a realistic chance that only one would be allocated based on location, distance and number of other licenced premises in Donnybrook.

From a department perspective, liquor licencing is not a priority. State funding is about facilities that are needed by the community.

It is recognised that bar sales bring income to a club, but it is suggested that the clubs could look at engaging with Clubs WA or Australian Sports Foundation for alternative revenue streams for clubs that do not have a liquor licence.

12. Successful multi-club facilities

Oasis Club Rooms, Kalgoorlie – Touch, Teeball and Rugby

Leschenault Sports Pavilion, Australind – Soccer, Cricket, Football, Swimming (as an external user) as well as general community

Katanning Leisure Centre – indoor and outdoor sports

Centennial Park, Albany – 2 Football Clubs