

NORTHERN BEACHES SPORTSGROUNDS STRATEGY (DRAFT)

MAY 2017

NORTHERN
BEACHES
COUNCIL

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Message from the Administrator

In April 2017 we asked the Northern Beaches community to give their feedback on the potential actions we put forward to meet the shortfall in sportsfields so that there is enough space for all to play.

Over 5,000 submissions were received, confirming my view that the future of sport and our sporting facilities is vitally important to our community. Most submissions accept there is a shortage of sportsfields and we need to provide an adequate supply to meet the needs of our growing community. A number of these also support conversion of golf course land.

Many submissions argue strongly against any conversion of golf course land, and particularly against the loss of all or part of Warringah Golf Course, including in the submission and petition from the Warringah Golf Club. Reasons given are mostly around its suitability for older golfers being so flat, loss of visual amenity and trees and traffic congestion from increased weekend use.

A priority identified in a number of submissions is to achieve better use of existing sportsfields owned by private and public schools. Council agrees this issue should be further explored although past experience indicates this is not easy to achieve. Some others called for greater use of crown land, ignoring the fact that much of it is located in hilly bushland if not in State or National Parks.

Overall it is accepted that the shortfall and over-use is real and that while other measures will reduce the shortfall, these will not be sufficient to close the gap forecast over the next 15 years. If the shortfall of playing fields is to be substantially reduced conversion of some land currently used for golf should not be ruled out.

This paper presents a 15 year strategy to address the current and future needs for sportsfields based on the views of our community and advice from expert planners focussed on:

- A. Allocating sportsfields based on a needs and participation growth basis.
- B. Improving the capacity and resilience of existing sportsfields.
- C. Building new sportsfields in new housing development areas (Warriewood and Ingleside).
- D. Partnering with schools to provide additional sportsfields for the community.
- E. Installing synthetic surfaces on some existing sportsfields to enable greater use
- F. Converting suitable open space to sportsgrounds including some golf course land as needed, with all alternatives to increase supply and improve capacity to be implemented where feasible prior to proceeding with such a conversion.

An assessment purely based on empirical data supports the conversion of the 18 holes of Warringah Golf Course to a mixture of playing fields and parklands connected by a network of shared paths. There is no doubt this new area could be developed in such a way as to preserve many of the established trees while at the same time giving the public much greater access to picnic areas, playgrounds and open space as all the perimeter fences came down. Of all the council owned golf courses Warringah is also the most suitable for conversion given its location on major roads and serviced by the soon-to-be commenced B Line.

Notwithstanding the above, loss of the full 18 holes would see the end of a long-standing club with an active and passionate membership. It would also see the loss of the most topographically suitable course for older golfers who enjoy the relatively flat layout.

While the current leadership of the club argues strongly against the viability of a nine-hole course there are many examples of successful nine-hole ventures. A new 20 year lease on a nine-hole course could enable a new purpose-built club house within District Park, adjoining the course and reaping the benefits of greater member and public utilisation. A separate but linked year lease to 2022 over the other 9 holes, with 3 x 5 yearly extension options for the Council would maintain the current course configuration over the short to medium term to allow the council and community to evaluate progress on closing the demand/supply gap for playing fields.

This is a balanced solution that provides more sportsfields to address the shortage and ensures at a minimum that Warringah Golf Course remains as a nine-hole course. All alternatives to increase supply and improve capacity are to be explored and implemented where feasible, prior to proceeding with such a conversion.

Council is committed to enabling as many residents as possible to participate in active sport and accepts there is an unacceptable current and future shortfall of sports fields.

It is vital we take all practical and affordable measures to close the gap between supply and demand so that our community has enough space for all to play.

Dick Persson AM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sport and recreation is a central part of the lives of Northern Beaches' residents. However the sportsfields relied on by the community are under increasing pressure, with growing participation rates, deteriorating field conditions and not enough space for all to play. The Sporting Union, major sports organisations and the community are calling for more fields and improved facilities, with the Union also seeking a review of public open space including golf courses to provide more supply.

Northern Beaches Council is now able to plan for the whole of the Northern Beaches and since mid-2016 has been reviewing the options and engaging with the community to identify a forward plan. This draft Strategy sets out the proposed 15 year plan to provide a single approach to the management and long term planning of sporting facilities on the Northern Beaches.

Review confirms a shortage of sportsfields and a high supply of golf courses

The Northern Beaches currently has:

- 122 sports fields supplying a total playing area of 116.5 hectares to over 50,000 playing members across 17 sports, plus thousands of spectators, families and volunteers.
- 13 golf courses covering 453 hectares catering to over 10,000 members, 7 of which are on public land covering 180 hectares catering to over 4,000 members, as well as thousands of rounds of public golf by non-members.

There is a current and growing shortfall of sports fields:

- Grass sportsfields have a 'sustainable capacity' of 35 hours per week and average usage is well above this, with 92 of 122 sportsfields over-used. This equates to bookings of more than 800 hours per week over sustainable capacity.
- There is a current shortfall of 24 hectares of playing area, equivalent to over 24 sportsfields, based on using all fields at sustainable capacity. This increases to 41 hectares by 2031.
- The Northern Beaches has around half or less sportsgrounds supply per capita when compared to some other similar sized Councils e.g. The Hills and Sutherland Shire Councils.

Participation rates are growing, many people are being turned away and forecasts indicate playing numbers will only continue to grow particularly in women's sport and over 35 competitions. Council also has a responsibility to enable people to play sport to help address the rise in obesity.

There is a high supply of golf courses and a slow but clear decline in golf participation:

- Double the courses on the Northern Beaches per capita compared to other areas in Sydney
 - One 18 hole golf course per 49,867 people across Sydney.
 - The equivalent of one per 23,151 people on the Northern Beaches.
- A 16% decline in membership numbers over the past 10 years at public courses.

Potential actions explored to address the shortfall in supply

Council released a Discussion Paper in April 2017 exploring a range of potential actions to address the shortfall, engaging the community to identify its level of support for the potential actions.

Potential actions included:

- Action 1: Make better use of existing sportsgrounds to increase availability and resilience, including; irrigation, drainage, lighting, reconfiguration and re-allocation of fields.
- Action 2: Convert more existing sportsfields to synthetic to increase sustainable capacity.
- Action 3: Acquiring or securing additional private land as part of new housing developments.
- Action 4: Converting existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses.
- Action 5: Acquiring additional land by purchasing Crown, private or other land.

Alternatively we could choose:

- Action 6: Do nothing and accept the shortfall in supply.

Modelling of these actions to 2031 found that even with actions taken to improve the efficiency of existing fields, the commissioning of new fields in new release areas and the increased use of artificial surfacing, there would be a significant shortfall unless some council/government owned land was converted from golf to sportsfields.

Community views on what actions Council should take

Council conducted significant community engagement in April and May 2017 to seek community feedback on these potential actions. Analysis of the more than 5,000 submissions received has been captured in the Community

Engagement Report developed for Council by Parkland Planners. A summary of the responses to each of the six proposed actions to address the current and future shortfall in sportsfields and Options A and Option B is outlined in Table 1. This includes an assessment of the community's preference of two main options:

- Option A - Implement actions 1 to 4. This means we are largely able to meet the shortfall and have enough sportsfields to meet our needs.
- Option B - Implement actions 1 to 3. This means we will have a shortfall of supply, fields will be overused and we may not have enough space for sport.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Phone survey (402 responses)</i>	<i>Online survey (4,152 responses)</i>	<i>Written submissions (634)</i>
1	Make better use of existing sportsgrounds	92% at least somewhat supportive	96% at least somewhat supportive	Support by approx. 21% of respondents
2	Convert more sportsfields to synthetic	62% at least somewhat supportive	81% at least somewhat supportive	Support by approx. 35% of respondents
3	Acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments	91% at least somewhat supportive	97% at least somewhat supportive	Support by approx. 7% of respondents
4	Convert existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses	64% at least somewhat supportive	73% at least somewhat supportive	Support by approx. 9% of respondents but opposed by approx. 35% of respondents
5	Acquire and embellish additional land	27% at least somewhat supportive	71% at least somewhat supportive	Support by approx. 3% of respondents
6	Do nothing and accept the shortfall	6% at least somewhat supportive	1% at least somewhat supportive	Support by < 1% of respondents
Option A	Actions 1, 2, 3, 4	58% prefer Option A	73% prefer Option A	
Option B	Actions 1, 2, 3	36% prefer Option B	26% prefer Option B	

Table 1: Summary of the community engagement on the Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, Community Engagement Report, Parkland Planners, May 2017

In addition, Council received a petition from the Warringah Golf Club to not convert Warringah Golf Course that was signed by 10,373 people.

The majority of submissions support the need for more sportsfields on the Northern Beaches to meet an increasing demand for fields.

As can be seen above, the majority from phone and on-line surveys also are at least somewhat supportive of the conversion of golf course land as necessary. However many submissions argue strongly against any loss of golf

course land, and particularly against the loss of all or part of Warringah Golf Course, suggesting there are many alternative options available such as schools or that there is no need because current fields are not fully utilised.

Overall it is accepted that the shortfall and over-use is real and that while other measures will reduce the shortfall, these will not be sufficient to close the gap forecast over the next 15 years. If the growing gap between the supply and demand for playing fields is to be substantially reduced conversion of some land currently used for golf should not be ruled out.

Strategic approach to addressing community demand for sportfields

Council has developed a draft 15 year Strategy to address the current and future needs for sportfields.

The strategy is focussed on the following priority actions identified through the community engagement:

- A. Allocate sportfields based on a needs and participation growth basis.
- B. Improve the capacity and resilience of existing sportfields.
- C. Build new sportfields in new housing development areas (Warriewood and Ingleside).
- D. Partner with schools to provide additional sportfields for the community.
- E. Install synthetic surfaces on some existing sportfields to enable greater use
- F. Convert suitable open space to sportsgrounds including some golf course land as needed.

The focus in the first 5 years to 2022 is implementing actions that increase capacity of existing fields and providing additional supply where most supported by the community. Actions such as:

- A. Re-allocating grounds to maximise use.
- B. Installing, drainage, lighting and reconfiguring grounds.
- C. Building new fields in Warriewood Valley and planning for Ingleside.
- D. Working with schools to seek to provide use of school fields for community sports.
- E. Installing synthetic surfaces at Lionel Watts and Cromer 2, and investigating options for further synthetic fields including synthetic hockey fields.

During this first five year period Council will also plan for future potential conversion of suitable public land to sportfields so that this can be implemented as required from 2022. This includes:

- F. Developing a masterplan for the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space and undertaking a feasibility study regarding Balgowlah Golf Course.

The Strategic Implementation Plan (page 22) provides an overview of the Strategy to 2031.

Planning for conversion of public open space including golf course land

As the shortfall is not able to be addressed by actions A-E alone, Council reviewed potential suitable open space for sportsgrounds on public golf course land, crown land and at schools. For details of the review see section 6 of this report.

This review identified that:

- There are three potential crown land sites that could be used for sportfields (page 20).
- There are a number of school sites that could be used for community purposes and Council will as a priority begin negotiations about partnership arrangements, however this will be challenging due to concerns from schools and there are limitations as to how much this will contribute as several facilities are already being used by sporting groups (page 20).
- The most suitable public golf course land for sportfields is Warringah Golf Course followed by Balgowlah Golf Course (page 18).

Much attention during the community engagement period focussed on Warringah Golf Course and Council's review confirms it is the most appropriate for conversion to sportfields. Key factors are that the land is relatively flat land suitable for conversion, its lease is expiring, and it is in a central location and close to the B-line public transport. Most of the others rule themselves out of consideration for a range of lease, topographical, environmental or transport related reasons. For example Wakehurst and Avalon are too hilly, Mona Vale is in an iconic location, Palm Beach is difficult to get to and initial assessment suggests Balgowlah would result in a low sports field yield.

An assessment purely based on empirical data supports the conversion of the full 18 holes of Warringah Golf Course to a mixture of playing fields and parklands connected by a network of walking tracks and cycle ways.

Notwithstanding the above, conversion would see the end of a long-standing club with an active and passionate membership. It would also see the loss of the most topographically suitable course for older golfers who enjoy walking the relatively flat layout.

This Strategy recommends a balanced solution that provides more sportfields to address the shortage and also retains Warringah Golf Course as a nine-hole course. All alternatives to increase supply and improve capacity are to be explored and implemented where feasible, prior to proceeding with such a conversion.

The strategy for potential conversion of golf course land would include:

- Seeking tenders for:
 - a new 20-year lease for the southern half of Warringah Golf Course, together with the Warringah Recreation Centre and North Manly Bowling Club (District Park)
 - a new separate but linked lease to 2022 over the northern 9 holes, with 3 x 5 yearly extension options at the discretion of Council. This would maintain the current course configuration over the short to medium term to allow the Council and community to evaluate progress on closing the demand/supply gap for playing fields.
- Developing a masterplan by 2021 for the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space, with conversion to sportsfields from 2022 as required.
- Undertaking a feasibility study for the conversion of Balgowlah Golf Course to a sporting area incorporating fields and passive open space, with an extension of the Balgowlah Golf Club lease to 2022 while the feasibility study is conducted.

Implementation and impact of the Strategy on supply and demand to 2031

If all strategy actions and recommendations are implemented, including conversion of golf course land, the shortfall will be substantially reduced from 41 hectares to 5.1 hectares by 2031.

Council will seek to fund and deliver these recommendations in partnership with other tiers of government and local, state and national sporting bodies and other groups as opportunities arise.

The strategy and outcomes of the implementation of recommendations will be reviewed every 5 years.

Have Your Say

Council is seeking feedback on the Strategic Implementation Plan proposed in this Sportsground Strategy Paper and the Sportsgrounds Strategic Directions Analysis Report. To find out about how to provide feedback, visit our online project page at yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au. Following this community engagement a Final Draft Sportsgrounds Strategy report is planned to be presented to the July 2017 Council meeting.



1 INTRODUCTION

Sport and recreation is a central part of the lives of Northern Beaches' residents.

Major sporting organisations have been calling for many years for more sportsfields and new and improved facilities, particularly now with changing and ever increasing participation rates. These organisations, which represent more than 50,000 members and players, advocate that there is a serious overall shortage of playing fields, resulting in thousands of would-be participants being turned away, most fields experiencing serious degradation from 'overuse' and many teams unable to train as needed.

In discussing options the groups also advocated for a review of whether some Council-owned golf course lands could be more equitably used for sport with unmet growing demand.

The creation of the Northern Beaches Council one year ago provided the opportunity for a single approach to the management and long term planning of these sportsfields and facilities. Council in August 2016 announced a review and commenced work on the Northern Beaches Sportsground Strategy - a long term sports facility plan to guide the development of sportsfields and facilities for the next 15 years.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SPORTSGROUNDS STRATEGY

To inform this Strategy, Council engaged experts in the fields of sports planning and golf course feasibility to conduct independent analyses of the extent of any current and future shortfall in sportsgrounds and a market assessment of golf courses on the Northern Beaches.

This included an extensive review of relevant research and planning documents and budgets, population analysis, consultation with representatives of sporting associations, golf clubs, schools, state sporting organisations and modelling of future demand and supply.

These reviews were presented to the community in a Discussion Paper titled the Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, a summary of which is outlined in the following pages. The Discussion Paper identified a shortfall of sportsfields and outlined proposed strategic directions for addressing the shortfall, measures such as maximising the use of existing fields, converting fields to synthetic surfaces and the potential for converting golf courses to provide for additional sportsgrounds and feature parkland.

Council commenced engagement with the Northern Beaches community in April 2017 to discuss these options and provided the community with the opportunity to have their say. Findings of this community feedback are detailed in the Community Engagement report prepared by Parkland Planners. Council's independent expert sports planners Otium Planning Group then developed recommendations for Council in the Sportsground Strategic Directions Analysis report based on this feedback from the community.

This strategy has been informed by these reports and is intended to inform Council's capital works program, potential projects for external funding and long term management and planning for sportsgrounds and associated facilities.

3. CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE NEEDS

The Northern Beaches currently has:

- 122 sports fields supplying a total playing area of 116.5 hectares to over 50,000 playing members across 17 sports, plus thousands of spectators, families and volunteers.
- 13 golf courses covering 453 hectares catering to over 10,000 members, 7 of which are on public land covering 180 hectares catering to over 4,000 members, as well as thousands of rounds of public golf by non-members.

What is the current state of our sportsfields?

There is a current and growing shortfall of sports fields. Council's external sports planners Otium Planning Group in their Sportsgrounds Needs Analysis (December 2016) identified that:

- Sportsfields have a 'sustainable capacity' of 35 hours per week. This benchmark is high to support as much use as possible and when exceeded playing surfaces deteriorate, leading to dead grass and muddy or dusty conditions.
- Average usage is well above sustainable capacity, with 92 of 122 sportsfields over-used. This equates to bookings of more than 800 hours per week over sustainable capacity.
- There is a current shortfall of 24 hectares of playing area, equivalent to over 24 sportsfields, based on using all fields at sustainable capacity. This increases to 41 hectares by 2031.
- Without an increase in playing areas, sports will not be able to cater for demand and will need to continue current practices such as capping membership.

The Northern Beaches has around half or less sportsgrounds supply per capita when compared to some other similar sized Councils e.g. The Hills Council and Sutherland Shire Council.

Local Government	Population	Hectares (ha) of sportsgrounds	Population/ha
Northern Beaches Council	266,247	116.5	2,285
Sutherland Shire Council	226,220	193.9	1,167
Hills Council	160,339	174	921

Table 2: Source: Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, April 2017

Increasing participation rates and the need to increase activity to help address obesity

Northern Beaches sport is experiencing high growth in sports participation and cannot meet demand, with increased participation especially by women, juniors and over 35 competitions. For example:

- Touch football membership has increased by over 32% in the last three years and has over 6,500 members. Touch cannot meet demand, caps the number of teams, and recently turned away 20 teams due to the shortage in sports fields.
- Australian Football League (AFL) has increased by over 26% in the last three years and has over 1,300 members. AFL has stated its growth is limited due to access to sports fields.
- Football (soccer) has increased by over 8.5% in the last three years and has over 17,600 members. Some groups cap the number of teams due to the lack of sports fields.
- Six-a-side football (soccer) has grown by over 50% in the last three years and has over 3,700 members. In 2016 over 1,000 players were turned away due to the shortage of sports fields.
- Cricket has increased by over 6% in the last three years and has over 2,200 current members, with growth limited by the shortage of sports fields.
- Hockey is at capacity and there is no growth potential without more sports fields.

Participation rates and community needs for sport and exercise are changing. The recent increase in media coverage of women's sport and increase in the opportunities for women of all ages at all levels to participate in sport, from cricket, to AFL, football (soccer) and rugby is impacting on sports participation with forecasts indicating playing numbers will only continue to grow.

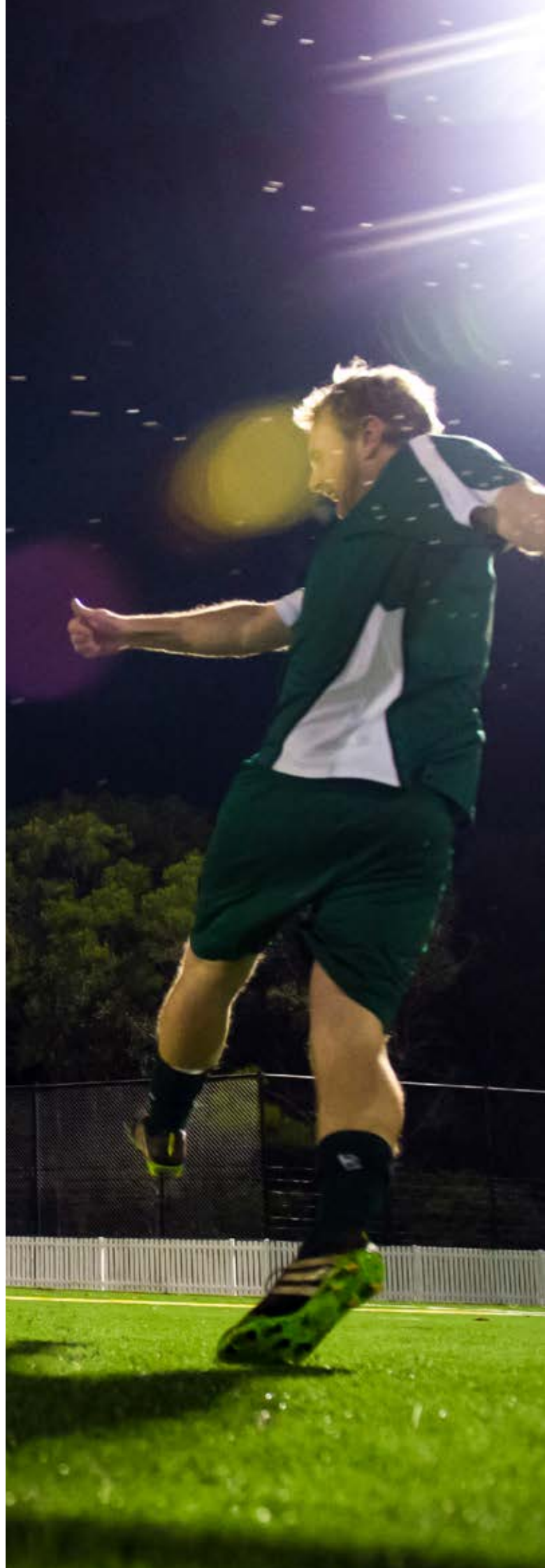
Council also has an important role in addressing the rise in childhood obesity by providing enough facilities and encouraging active sport participation. Tackling childhood obesity is one of the NSW Premier's top 12 challenges with the NSW Department of Health reporting that one in five (23.6%) children (24% of boys and 23.1% of girls) being overweight or obese, NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey 2010.

What is the current situation with our Golf Courses?

Council's external golf planners Golf Business Advisory Services (GBAS) in their Northern Beaches Golf Market

Assessment (November 2016) identified that:

- There are double the courses on the Northern Beaches per head of population compared to other areas in Sydney:
 - One 18 hole golf course per 49,867 people across Sydney.
 - The equivalent of one per 23,151 people on the Northern Beaches.
- Member demand levels are slowly declining with a 16% decline in membership numbers over the past 10 years at public courses.
- Demand is being fragmented across a number of Northern Beaches' golf courses.
- Whilst profits are currently being achieved, they are not at a level that allows for sustained re investment in facility infrastructure.
- A reduction in supply may further assist the market to achieve greater sustainability.



4. POTENTIAL ACTIONS EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THE SHORTFALL IN SUPPLY

What are our options?

Council has explored a range of potential actions to address the need for more sportsgrounds and new and improved facilities. These potential actions were outlined in the Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, April 2017, and the community was engaged to identify its level of support for the various potential actions.

Action 1: Make better use of existing sportsgrounds to increase availability and resilience.

Actions include:

Improving capacity by installing and upgrading lighting, upgrading drainage, improving playing surface quality, reconfiguring sportsgrounds for multiuse and improving resource management.

Re-allocating fields to sports with highest growth and need for space and full allocation of all available sportsfield hours and working with schools or other institutions.

Action 2: Convert more existing sportsfields to synthetic to increase sustainable capacity.

This action increases sustainable capacity of sportsfields from 35 to 54 hours a week as they can be used for longer hours and in wet weather without negatively impacting on surface quality.

We could also create more sportsfields by:

Action 3: Acquiring or securing additional private land as part of new housing developments.

Action 4: Converting existing open space to sports fields e.g. golf courses.

Action 5: Acquiring additional land by purchasing Crown, private or other land.

Alternatively we could choose:

Action 6: Do nothing and accept the shortfall in supply.

A comparison of these actions is outlined in the following table 3 and graph 1.

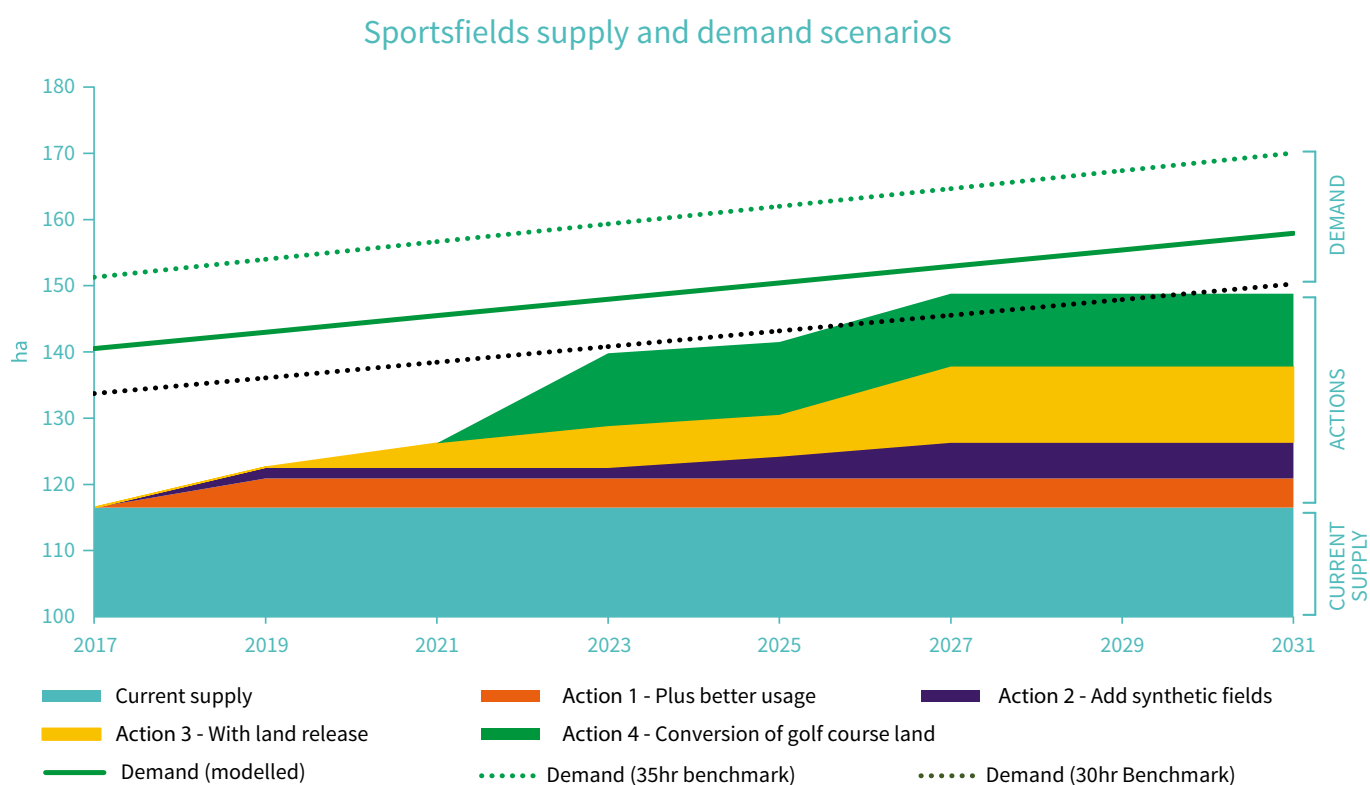
The need to implement all actions to address the shortfall in supply

The potential actions have been modelled over time to assess the impact on the shortfall of supply. As can be seen from graph 1 below, the gap between supply and demand increases from 24ha to 41ha by 2031 with no action.

The modelling shows that even with actions taken to improve the efficiency of existing fields, the commissioning of new fields in new release areas and the increased use of artificial surfacing, there would be a significant shortfall unless some council owned land was converted from golf to sportsfields.

Action	Impact on shortfall (playing area)	Funding per hectare (estimate)	Cost to rates per household over 15 years (estimate)
1. Make better use of existing sportsgrounds	4.4 hectares	\$270 thousand	\$49 (\$3.25 pa)
2. Convert more sportsfields to synthetic	5.5 hectares	\$2.7-\$3 million	\$239 (\$15.93 pa)
3 Acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments	3.6 hectares (Warriewood)	\$4.75-\$5.25 million	\$0 (funded by new housing development)
	7.8 hectares (Ingleside)	\$6.5-\$7 million	\$0 (funded by new housing development)
4 Convert existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses	11 hectares (example)	\$1.4-\$1.8 million	\$231 (\$15.40 pa)
5. Acquire and embellish additional land	11 hectares (example)	\$6.5-\$7 million	\$1,059 (\$70.60 pa)
6 Do nothing and accept the shortfall	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table 3: Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, April 2017



Graph 1: Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, April 2017

5. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON WHAT ACTIONS COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE

Council conducted significant community engagement in April and May 2017 to seek community feedback on the potential actions outlined in the Discussion Paper and the Sportsground Needs Analysis and Golf Market Assessment reports for community input.

Feedback was sought on the strategic directions and each of the six actions proposed for addressing the shortfall in sportsfields including the potential for converting some golf course land to sportsfields, parkland and passive open space:

- 1 Make better use of existing sportsgrounds.
- 2 Convert more sportsfields to synthetic.
- 3 Acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments.
- 4 Convert existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses.
- 5 Acquire and embellish additional land.
- 6 Do nothing and accept the shortfall.

To gauge community preference, two options for the future were proposed:

Option A - Implement actions 1 to 4. This means we are largely able to meet the shortfall and have enough sportsfields to meet our needs.

Option B - Implement actions 1 to 3. This means we will have a shortfall of supply, fields will be overused and we may not have enough space for sport.

Council's community engagement on the Discussion Paper involved:

- Telephone and online surveys conducted by an independent consultant.
- The opportunity to complete an online feedback form available on Council's website.
- Six community drop-in sessions.
- Briefings for sports and golf representatives.
- A Sports Forum for relevant sports associations, clubs and State Sports Organisations.

-Written submissions to Council.

The Discussion Paper, research reports and a project overview were all made available on Council's website and the community engagement opportunities were publicised on Council's website and social media and widely promoted through local media. E-mails were also sent to;

key sport and golf stakeholders, 384 people who registered an interest and to 60,000 Northern Beaches What's On registered members.

Analysis of the feedback received has been captured in the Community Engagement Report developed by Parkland Planners for Council. A summary of the responses to each of the six proposed actions to address the current and future shortfall in sportsfields and Options A and Option B is outlined in Table 4.

The Community Engagement Report indicates that more than 5,000 submissions were received during the community engagement period across all methods and that addressing the shortfall in sportsfields was supported by the majority of respondents.

In addition, Council received a petition from the Warringah Golf Club to not convert Warringah Golf Course that was signed by 10,373 people.

In analysing and reporting on the community feedback Parkland Planners advise that the random telephone survey is most reflective of the demographic profile of the Northern Beaches, followed in descending order by the online survey, the written submissions and the Sports Forum.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Phone survey (402 responses)</i>	<i>Online survey (4,152 responses)</i>	<i>Written submissions (634)</i>	<i>Sports Forum (40 attendees)</i>
1	Make better use of existing sportsgrounds	92% at least somewhat supportive Mean=4.09/5 Rank =1	96% at least somewhat supportive Mean=4.66/5 Rank =1	Support by approx. 21% of respondents Rank 2	Strong support
2	Convert more sportsfields to synthetic	62% at least somewhat supportive Mean=3.01/5 Rank 4	81% at least somewhat supportive Mean=3.71/5 Rank 3	Support by approx. 35% of respondents Rank 1	Strong support
3	Acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments	91% at least somewhat supportive Mean=4.13/5 Rank =1	97% at least somewhat supportive Mean=4.68/5 Rank =1	Support by approx. 7% of respondents Rank 4	Support
4	Convert existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses	64% at least somewhat supportive Mean=3.08/5 Rank 3	73% at least somewhat supportive Mean=3.84/5 Rank 4	Support by approx. 9% of respondents but opposed by approx. 35% of respondents Rank 3	Support
5	Acquire and embellish additional land	27% at least somewhat supportive Mean=2.05/5 Rank 5	71% at least somewhat supportive Mean=3.72/5 Rank 5	Support by approx. 3% of respondents Rank 5	n/a
6	Do nothing and accept the shortfall	6% at least somewhat supportive Rank 6	1% at least somewhat supportive Rank 6	Support by < 1% of respondents Rank 6	n/a
Option A	Actions 1, 2, 3, 4	58% prefer Option A	73% prefer Option A	-	-
Option B	Actions 1, 2, 3	36% prefer Option B	26% prefer Option B	-	-

Table 4: Overview of the community engagement on the Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Discussion Paper, Community Engagement Report, Parkland Planners, May 2017

A summary of the community feedback

The majority of people and organisations support the need for more sportsfields on the Northern Beaches to meet an increasing demand for fields. 79% of residents surveyed by phone were supportive or very supportive of Council addressing the issue of shortfall in sportsfield availability, 93% at least 'somewhat supportive'.

Ultimately residents see this as an important issue and support Council actively planning to address the current and future needs of the whole community, and not just one sporting group.

The Community Engagement Report (Parkland Planners) identifies that support for potential actions is as follows:

The equal number 1 ranked actions from the phone and online surveys were Action 1 make better use of existing sportsgrounds (including use of school sportsgrounds) and Action 3 to acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments.

Action 2 to convert more sportsfields to synthetic (particularly for hockey, football (soccer) and multi-purpose sport) was ranked number 1 in written submissions and ranked 3 and 4 from the online and phone surveys respectively.

Action 4 to convert existing open space to sportsfields was ranked number 3 for the phone survey and written submissions and ranked number 4 for online surveys.

Action 5 Acquire and embellish additional land was generally more supported by members of golf clubs and sporting groups was ranked number 5 across all methods of engagement. Action 6 to do nothing and accept the shortfall ranked number 6 across all methods of engagement.

The Community Engagement Report (Parkland Planners) also shows that the community preference is for Option A, implementation of actions 1 to 4 including the conversion of all or part of a golf course to sportsfields:

Both online and phone survey participants indicated their preference for Option A, which will result in meeting the majority of the shortfall in sportsfields, 73% online, 58% by phone.

Reasons for online and phone survey participants preferring Option A included that they felt this was the best combination of actions to take to address the shortfall. Option A included converting golf courses, which many residents felt were dedicated to too few golfers using large parcels of land, while players of other sports are crammed onto existing sportsfields.

Option B, which included implementing all of actions 1 to 3 resulting in the shortfall in sportsfields not being met received significantly less support (26% online, 36% by phone), with those preferring this option indicating it was mainly because they were 'against the conversion of golf courses'.



6. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ADDRESSING COMMUNITY DEMAND FOR SPORTSFIELDS

Council has developed a Draft 15 year Strategy to address the current and future needs for sportsfields.

The Strategy is focussed on the following priority actions identified through the community engagement:

- A. Allocate sportsfields based on a needs and participation growth basis.
- B. Improve the capacity and resilience of existing sportsfields.
- C. Build new sportsfields in new housing development areas (Warriewood and Ingleside).
- D. Partner with schools to provide additional sportsfields for the community.
- E. Install synthetic surfaces on some existing sportsfields to enable greater use
- F. Convert suitable open space to sportsgrounds including some golf course land.

The focus in the first 5 years to 2022 is implementing actions that increase capacity of existing fields and providing additional supply where most supported by the community. Actions such as:

- A. Re-allocating grounds to maximise use.
- B. Installing, drainage, lighting and reconfiguring grounds.
- C. Building new fields in Warriewood Valley and planning for Ingleside.
- D. Working with schools to seek to provide use of school fields for community sports.
- E. Installing synthetic surfaces at Lionel Watts and Cromer 2, and investigating options for further synthetic fields including synthetic hockey fields.

During this first five year period Council will also plan for future conversion of suitable public land to sportsfields so that this can be implemented as required from 2022. This includes:

- F. Developing a masterplan for the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space and undertaking a feasibility study regarding Balgowlah Golf Course.

The Strategic Implementation Plan (page 22) provides an overview of the Strategy to 2031.

Strategies and actions to improve capacity and supply

The Strategy is based on and adopts the recommendations

detailed in the Sportsgrounds Strategic Directions Analysis Report (Otium Planning Group). Council reviewed all potential actions recommended in the Analysis Report based on a range of factors including; community feedback, budget and timing.

The Analysis Report also provides a framework for addressing the identified shortfall in sportsfields, and current and future facility needs as well as key recommendations and prioritised over the next 15 years to 2031. This report details specific actions recommended to Council categorised as follows:

‘Planning and/or management’ actions required to investigate and/ or facilitate further opportunities to increase capacity or quality of facilities.

Actions that ‘Increase Capacity’ and reduce the need for additional land through a range of improvements and upgrades.

‘Service level’ actions which address ground/ facility quality issues to ensure sustainability and optimum use.

A full list of recommendations is available in the Analysis Report

Review of potential open space including golf course, Crown and school land

Council has also reviewed potential suitable open space for sportsgrounds on public golf course land, crown land and at schools based on a number of factors including; potential useable land area, topography, accessibility, traffic considerations, environmental considerations, neighbouring resident considerations, planning and development constraints and capital and operational cost considerations.

Public Golf Course Land

In response to the community engagement Council has undertaken preliminary investigation of public golf course land that could potentially be used for sportsfields. The investigation was based on topography, natural environmental impact, community impact, tenure and accessibility of location. An overview of the assessment of public golf course land is outlined in the table on page 19

Table 5: Assessment of public golf course land

<i>Site</i>	<i>Topography</i>	<i>Natural Environmental Impact</i>	<i>Community Impact</i>	<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Accessibility of Location</i>	<i>Total</i>
Avalon	1	3	3	5	3	15
Balgowlah	3	4	3	5	3	18
Long Reef	2	2	1	3	3	11
Mona Vale	4	3	2	4	5	18
Palm Beach	5	4	2	5	1	17
Wakehurst	1	2	3	1	2	9
Warringah	5	3	3	5	4	20

Scoring definitions are presented in the following tables.

<i>Score</i>	<i>Topography variance of the site</i>	<i>Natural Environmental impact</i>
1	Not suitable (20 metres plus)	Very High
2	Site would need substantial physical alteration (15-19 metres)	High
3	Gentle slope with retaining structures required (10-14 metres)	Moderate
4	Largely flat with some major earthworks required (5-9 metres)	Minor
5	Flat site with minimal earthworks required (less than 5 metres)	Minimal

Table 6: Scoring definitions for the assessment of public golf course land

<i>Score</i>	<i>Community Impact</i>	<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Accessibility of Location</i>
1	Very high - very significant impact on visual amenity, congestion and usability of surrounding area	12 years plus	Isolated location, very limited access to public transport
2	High - significant impact on visual amenity, congestion and usability of surrounding area	9-12 years	Minor centre, limited access to public transport
3	Moderate - impacts on visual amenity, congestion and usability of surrounding area	6-9 years	Urban centre, moderate access to public transport
4	Minor - minor impact on visual amenity, congestion and usability of surrounding area	3-6 years	Key urban centre, good access to public transport
5	Minimal - minimal impact on visual amenity, congestion and usability of surrounding area	0-3 years	Major population centre, good access to public transport

Table 7: Scoring definitions for the assessment of public golf course land

Based on this preliminary investigation, it is considered that the most suitable public golf course land for conversion sportsfields is Warringah Golf Course followed by the Balgowlah and Mona Vale Golf Courses. However, it is considered that the iconic location of Mona Vale Golf Course overlooking Mona Vale Beach suggests that this should be a significantly less preferred option.

As indicated in the Discussion Paper another option may also be for Council to support the merger of nearby golf courses. Options may include for example Warringah and Balgowlah Golf Clubs or Mona Vale and Bayview Golf Clubs which are close and a merger may enable stronger and more successful clubs in the long term.

An assessment purely based on empirical data supports the conversion of the full 18 holes of Warringah Golf Course to a mixture of playing fields and parklands connected by a network of walking tracks and cycle ways. This new area could be developed in such a way as to preserve many of the established trees while at the same time giving the public much greater access to picnic areas, playgrounds and open space as all the perimeter fences came down.

Of all the council owned golf courses Warringah is also the most suitable for conversion given its location on major roads and serviced by regular public transport. The B Line commencement will further improve weekend access.

However, a large proportion of the written submissions received during the community engagement indicated a preference for golf course land not being converted to sportsfields before other options are explored and implemented. This included a petition submitted by Warringah Golf Club.

This Strategy recommends a balanced solution that provides more sportsfields to address the shortage and also retains Warringah Golf Club as a nine-hole course. All alternatives to increase supply and improve capacity are to be explored and implemented where feasible, prior to proceeding with such a conversion. The Strategy for potential conversion of golf course land would include:

- Seeking tenders for:
- a new 20-year lease for the southern half of Warringah Golf Course, together with the Warringah Recreation Centre and North Manly Bowling Club (District Park)
- a new separate but linked lease to 2022 over the northern 9 holes, with 3 x 5 yearly extension options for the Council. This would maintain the current course configuration over the short to medium term to allow the Council and community to evaluate progress on closing the demand/supply gap for playing fields.

- Developing a masterplan by 2021 for the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space, with conversion to sportsfields from 2022 as required.
- Undertaking a feasibility study for the conversion of Balgowlah Golf Course to a sporting area incorporating fields and passive open space, with an extension of the Balgowlah Golf Club lease to 2022 while the feasibility study is conducted.

Council would then consider implementation of the masterplan for conversion of golf course land to sportsfields from 2022.

Should the conversion of golf course land to sportsfields be implemented in the future, Council would need to support effected members, for example through a merger of memberships and could for example adjust tee times to provide greater use of courses by members.

Crown Land

Council has undertaken preliminary investigation of crown land on the Northern Beaches and opportunities for sports use. Some sixty sites with a land area greater than one hectare (one sportsfield) were identified. Based on topography, natural environmental impact, community impact and accessibility of location, three of these sites have so far been identified for further investigation:

- One site could accommodate mini fields.
- One site could accommodate one full size field.
- One site currently serves another recreation purpose and could accommodate one full size field.

Council will as a priority continue its investigation into suitable crown land and begin negotiations with the State Government about partnership arrangements for community and Council access.

School Land

Council has undertaken preliminary investigation of Northern Beaches schools and the following opportunities have been identified:

- 13 full size fields, 9 in government schools and 4 in non-government schools.
- 13 three quarter size fields, 10 in government schools and 3 in non-government schools.
- 18 mini fields, 9 in government schools and 9 in non-government schools.
- 14 cricket facilities, 12 in government schools and 2 in non-government schools.

There may be limited access or no net gain to some of these school facilities as several facilities are already being used by sporting groups. Council will as a priority begin negotiations with the Department of Education and relevant schools about partnership arrangements for community and Council access to school facilities.



The Strategic Implementation Plan

The table below provides an overview of the Draft 15 year Strategy to address the current and future needs for sportsfields. The full list of recommendations is detailed in the Sportsgrounds Strategic Directions Analysis Report prepared by Otium Planning Group.

Priorities	Short-term strategies (2017 to 2021)	Medium-term strategies (2022 to 2026)	Longer-term strategies (2027 to 2031)	Discussion Paper Actions
A: Allocate sportsfields based on needs and growth.	Review and update the sportsground allocation processes, consider demand management measures, review agreements and undertake regular monitoring of actual use and impacts.	Ongoing review and action as appropriate	Ongoing review and action as appropriate	Action 1: Make better use of existing sportsgrounds.
B: Improve capacity and resilience of existing sportsfields.	Improvements including irrigation, drainage, lighting, reconfiguring fields, upgrade amenities and car parking to improve capacity of fields. Example locations: Allambie Heights, John Fisher Park	Improvements including irrigation, drainage, lighting, reconfiguring fields, upgrade amenities and car parking to improve capacity of fields. Example locations: Balgowlah Oval	Improvements including irrigation, drainage, lighting, reconfiguring fields, upgrade amenities and car parking to improve capacity of fields. Example locations: Boondah Reserve	Action 1: Make better use of existing sportsgrounds.
C: Build new sportsfields in new housing development areas (Warriewood and Ingleside)	Continue with action to acquire land through s94 plan and convert to sportsfields - Warriewood Valley Land Release	Develop stage 1 fields in Ingleside in accordance with proposed timing for provision and development of land (South)	Develop stage 2 fields in Ingleside in accordance with proposed timing for provision and development of land (North)	Action 3: Acquire and embellish additional private land as part of new housing developments
D: Partner with schools to provide additional sportsfields for the community.	Investigate opportunities for joint use/development, or greater use, of school grounds for community and school use. In the first instance, focus on schools with larger fields.	Upgrade identified school facilities to cater for training and competition as agreed with schools and Department of Education.	Upgrade identified school facilities to cater for training and competition as agreed with schools and Department of Education.	Action 1: Make better use of existing sportsgrounds.
E: Install synthetic surfaces on some existing sportsfields to enable greater use.	Proceed with installation of synthetic surfaces at Lionel Watts and Cromer 2. Undertake a feasibility study into the potential funding, location, management and viability of developing dedicated wet surface synthetic hockey fields.	Review feasibility of potential sites for synthetic surfaces and install where feasible and budget allows. Develop new synthetic hockey facilities subject to the outcome of feasibility studies	Review feasibility of potential sites for synthetic surfaces and install where feasible and budget allows	Action 2: Convert more sportsfields to synthetic
F: Convert suitable open space to sportsgrounds including golf course land.	Develop a masterplan for the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space and link with the proposal for a sports and community facility in District Park. Continue to review other potential opportunities for the conversion of suitable open space to sportsfields. Undertake a feasibility study for the conversion of Balgowlah Golf Course to a sporting area incorporating fields and passive open space.	Convert the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space to provide 5 Ha of additional sportsfields.	Based on the outcomes of a feasibility study (and if required) convert Balgowlah Golf Course to a sporting area incorporating fields and passive open space to provide 3 Ha of additional sportsfields.	Action 4: Convert existing open space to sportsfields e.g. golf courses



7. POTENTIAL LAYOUT FOR GOLF COURSE CONVERSION

Legend:

- 1 Existing Amenities building
- 2 Proposed Amenities building
- 3 Proposed Shared / Fitness loop path
- 4 Proposed Car Parking
- 5 Proposed Bicycle Parking
- ▷ Entry points



Recreation

- Opportunity for informal gathering areas and passive recreation.

Car parking

- Extended car parking on Kentwell Road.

This is an artist's impression of the conversion of the northern half of Warringah Golf Course to a Centennial Park style sporting and recreational area incorporating fields, playgrounds and passive open space.





Play

- Create a diverse active recreation hub with playspace for all ages.
- Create a shared path network with a range of fitness stations for all ages.
- Create a widened buffer of wetland planting to Brookvale Creek.

Sport

- 5 sports fields proposed.



Sports Community Club Facility

- Investigate and develop a combined sports, recreation and community facility to support golf, sport, play and recreation centre.
- New bridge crossing over creek and path connecting the Sports Community Club Facility and golf course to sport and recreation areas and Nolan Reserve.

8. IMPACT OF THE STRATEGY ON SUPPLY OF SPORTSFIELDS TO 2031

In order to model the impact of the Strategy on the supply of sportsfields to 2031, an analysis has been conducted of each of the actions proposed. If nothing is done there will be a shortfall of 41 Ha by 2031. If all Strategy actions and recommendations are implemented, including conversion of golf course land, the shortfall will be substantially reduced to 5.1Ha by 2031 (see table 8).

<i>Shortfall and Supply of Sportsfields</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2026</i>	<i>2031</i>
Cumulative shortfall in sportsfields if do nothing (Ha)	24.0	29.3	35.2	41.4
Impact on shortfall by implementing all actions and recommendations(Ha)	n/a	16.6	10.2	9.5
Cumulative additional supply (Ha)	n/a	16.6	26.8	36.3
Shortfall in sportsfields (Ha)	(24.0)	(12.7)	(8.4)	(5.1)

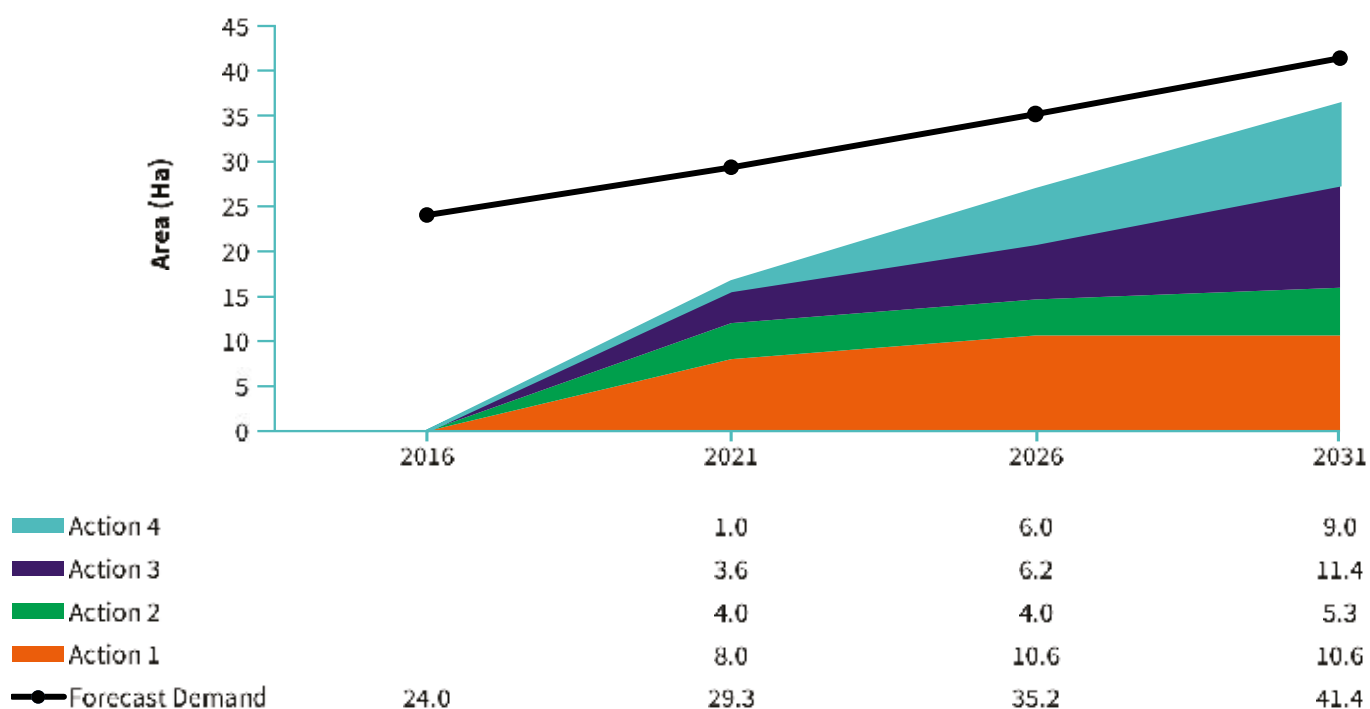
Table 8: Impact of the Strategy on supply of sportsfields over 15 years to 2031

The impact of each action is outlined in table 9. Including land identified through the community engagement, such as school land, has significantly increased the impact of action 1 from 4.4Ha to 10.6Ha.

<i>Priorities</i>	<i>2017- 2021 Short term (Ha)</i>	<i>2022-2026 Medium term (Ha)</i>	<i>2027-2031 Longer term (Ha)</i>	<i>Strategy Impact 15 yrs (Ha)</i>	<i>Discussion Paper Impact 15 yrs (Ha)</i>	<i>Discussion Paper Actions</i>
A, B, D: Make better use of existing grounds including: allocate fields based on needs & growth, improve capacity & resilience of existing fields, schools access.	8.0	2.6	0.0	10.6	4.4	Action 1: Make better use of existing grounds.
C. Build new fields in new housing development areas (Warriewood & Ingleside).	3.6	2.6	5.2	11.4	11.4	Action 3: Acquire & embellish additional private land as part of new housing development
E. Additional synthetic surfaces on some existing fields to enable greater use.	4.0	0.0	1.3	5.3	5.5	Action 2: Convert more fields to synthetic
F. Convert suitable open space to grounds including some golf course land.	1.0	5.0	3.0	9.0	11.0	Action 4: Convert existing open space to fields e.g. golf courses.
Impact on shortfall (Ha)	16.6	10.2	9.5	36.3	32.3	

Table 9: Impact of the Strategy on supply of sportsfields over 15 years to 2031, by Action.

Graph 2 below demonstrates the substantial impact on the supply of sportsfields by implementing all the actions and recommendations of the Strategy over 15 years to 2031.



Graph 2: Impact of the Strategy on supply of sportsfields the three 5 year periods to 2031.

Council will seek to fund and deliver these recommendations in partnership with other tiers of government and local, state and national sporting bodies and other groups as opportunities arise.

The Strategy and the outcomes of the implementation of recommendations will be reviewed every 5 years.

9. HAVE YOUR SAY

Council is seeking feedback on the Strategic Implementation Plan proposed in this Sportsground Strategy Paper and the Sportsgrounds Strategic Directions Analysis Report. To find out about how to provide feedback, visit our online project page at yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

On the project page you can:

- Read the Sportsground Strategy Paper, Community Engagement and Sportsgrounds Strategic Analysis reports and other research material.
- Read the Frequently Asked Questions.
- Complete an online submission form.
- Find out about other community engagement activities.

Following this community engagement a Final Draft Sportsgrounds Strategy report is planned to be presented to the July 2017 Council Meeting

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