

8.2 Outcomes of Brookvale Park Community Consultation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

Report to Council the outcomes of the community engagement process on the community's preferences for future directions of Brookvale Park and Oval and to recommend actions that result from those outcomes.

Summary

In August 2009 Council resolved to consult with the community on the future direction of Brookvale Park and Oval. Council engaged an independent consultant to undertake this process. The consultant has provided a final Report with results of the process and 29 recommendations for action. This Council Report provides a response to those recommendations.

The key results of the consultation process have been that the vast majority of the community want the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles to remain at Brookvale Oval, the community want the Oval upgraded to reflect modern standards they do not want rates to subsidise upgrades and therefore they want the Oval to be self funding.

Financial Impact

The costs associated with these recommendations are proposed to be funded from the recurrent budget with some from the Brookvale Oval Revitalisation Program.

Policy Impact

A review of the current Brookvale Park Plan of Management and current zoning and land classification of the southern portion of Brookvale Park is required.

RECOMMENDATION OF DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

- A. That Council note recommendations 1-29 of the Straight Talk Report as the views of the community following an extensive and diverse community engagement process.
- B. That Council immediately pursue Federal grant funding for upgrades and/or new works consistent with recommendation 22.
- C. That Council prepare and exhibit documentation to rezone and reclassify the southern portion of the Brookvale Park site for mixed-use development purposes, consistent with recommendations 19, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Straight Talk Report. This documentation includes:
 - i) A master plan for Brookvale Park
 - ii) A draft Plan of Management for Brookvale Park
 - iii) Associated draft planning instruments to enable the rezoning and reclassification of the area categorised as General Community Use and the southern portion of the area categorised as Sportsground.

- D. That Council prepare an Operations Manual for Major Events at Brookvale Oval, consistent with recommendations 10 and 29, with a view to providing improved traffic management and crowd disbursement and behaviour during major events.
 - E. That Council prepare a Marketing Strategy to attract new users to the Oval, including both commercial and non-commercial users, in accordance with recommendation 11.
 - F. That Council offer to the market by way of public tender the naming rights and use of advertising space at Brookvale Oval, consistent with recommendations 17 and 18, and delegate to the General Manager authority to enter into negotiations and finalise any arrangements for these items.
-



REPORT

Background

Brookvale Park is an area of land owned by Warringah Council in the southern portion of the Local Government Area. It is classified as community land and has three land categories, General Community Use, Sportsground (called Brookvale Oval) and Park. It has been used as the home ground of the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles (Sea Eagles), who play in the National Rugby League, for over 60 years. The entire infrastructure in Brookvale Oval has been developed for this purpose.

When compared to the standard of other suburban NRL grounds, Brookvale Oval is antiquated and fails to comply with requirements for modern professional sporting venues by not providing adequate disabled access, fit for purpose facilities and adequate undercover seating and food venues. The asset continues to deteriorate at an accelerated rate as it enters the latter stages of its life cycle. This will require higher and higher renewal costs as time goes by, and does not include additional or new facilities.

The current 5 year license agreement with the Sea Eagles, commencing in 2009, ensures that general maintenance and ongoing costs of the Oval are wholly covered by their licence fee. However this fee does not cover renewal costs or upgraded or new facilities.

This dilemma prompted Council to examine the future direction of Brookvale Oval and as a result the Park as a whole. In August 2009 Council resolved to engage an independent community consultation expert to undertake a far reaching and comprehensive community engagement process to ascertain the community's views on what direction Council should pursue in respect to Brookvale Park and particularly the use and funding of Brookvale Oval.

In November 2009 Council via a public Request for Quotation process engaged Straight Talk Pty Ltd. Straight Talk is an industry leader in engaging the community on contentious and complex issues on behalf of Local, State and Federal governments. Straight Talk ran an independent community consultation process that engaged the community on numerous levels to obtain a clear picture of community views on the future use, funding and level of service for Brookvale Oval. Straight Talk worked in collaboration with Bang the Table, who provided the web based community engagement, and Jetty Research who conducted the telephone, mail and web based surveys, to deliver the community engagement process.

Consultation

The overall consultation process is detailed in Straight Talk's Report in the attachment booklet.

The process included the following elements:

- a) Initial Consultation phase – this phase focused on drawing out the community's views on the Oval and issues they saw. It consisted of three main components:
 - i) Breakfast at Brookie – this was a moderated discussion between groups of 10 people on defined topics. (150 – 170 participants)
 - ii) Information and consultation stall at Warringah Mall – this event provided the wider community to view information and provide feedback on the various options that and issues that had been floated to date. Approximately 150 people attended the display.
 - iii) Moderated web forum that allowed people to be able to freely put forward their views and review detailed information on the Park and Oval. Over the course of the project there were over 5,500 views of the website and 705 comments posted on the eight different topics.

- b) Telephone survey of 500 randomly selected people across the LGA with minimum 20% from Brookvale suburb.
- c) Reply paid mail survey distributed to 57,000 residential homes (whole of Warringah LGA) and a corresponding online survey generated 858 mail surveys and 212 online surveys received.
- d) Focus Groups and outreach work were conducted to gain further insight to issues raised in the surveys and initial consultation. This outreach work was conducted with the following groups:
 - i) Focus Group – 10 Randomly selected Brookvale residents who reside within 200 metres of Brookvale Park
 - ii) Focus Group – 11 nominated high school students from Northern Beaches Secondary College and St Augustine's' College
 - iii) Brookvale Valley Community Group – this meeting was attended by ten of that group's members.
 - iv) Interviewed business owners in the Brookvale area for their views.
- e) A Deliberative Community Workshop held at Brookvale Public School was conducted to enable participants to view the options that had been raised in the consultation process so far and express their preferences. This is similar to the methodology used by the award winning Talk of the Town engagement process. The workshop event was attended by 80 participants who were invited based on the membership of the Sea Eagles, the Brookvale Valley Community Group and those that responded to Manly Daily advertisements. 30 members of the Brookvale Valley Community Group, 30 members of the Sea Eagles and the first 30 community members who responded to advertising in the Manly Daily were invited to participate in the workshop.
- f) Stakeholder Panel. The Panel consisted of members from:
 - St Augustine's College
 - Brookvale Public School
 - Northern Beaches Secondary College
 - Communities NSW (successor to the Department of Sport and Recreation)
 - Manly Warringah Pittwater Sporting Union
 - Warringah Chamber of Commerce and Industry
 - Brookvale Valley Community Group
 - Manly Warringah Sea Eagles
 - Three randomly selected community members including one under the age of 25



STRAIGHT TALK REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND COUNCIL COMMENTARY

Straight Talk has provided a detailed final report to Council including 29 recommendations for the future direction of Brookvale Park. It is recommended that all 29 recommendations be noted and actioned/implemented (Council staff recommendation A).

In the sections below the 29 recommendations are reproduced and staff commentary is supplied against each.

Straight Talk's recommendations have been developed on the basis of the outcomes activities and community preferences. These preferences have been determined by analysing the results of the various engagement methodologies described above. Accordingly, some of the recommendations reflect strong community preferences which there are clear consensus. However it is noted that there are a number of issues where there is no clear consensus.

Strategic Direction Recommendations

1. Maintain and upgrade Brookvale Oval to be a safe and fit for purpose regional sporting venue for professional sport and for community use.

Commentary: Straight Talk have highlighted that there is a strong community preference for Brookvale Oval to remain a professional standard sporting ground. The random telephone survey 91% of respondents declared this as their preference. Council, through the current revitalisation program, will ensure Brookvale Oval's viability as a professional sporting field for the short term. To ensure the facilities into the medium to long term significant upgrades are required. To fund these works and the ongoing costs of renewing the assets at Brookvale Oval, identification of sustainable long term funding is required.

2. Ensure that Brookvale Oval continues to be the home of the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles (Sea Eagles) over the long term and consider measures to:

- a) **Provide additional security of tenure to the Sea Eagles**
- b) **Justify Council expenditure on facilities to the wider community.**

Commentary: The community have clearly articulated that they want the Sea Eagles to remain. Council should therefore consider a longer license term when the current license expires in 2013.

Council currently justifies expenditure through the Strategic Community Plan and statutory reporting process. This includes a capital justification process to enable prioritisation of projects between and within asset classes.

3. Commit to action to ensure the long term future for Brookvale Park and Oval and ensure appropriate funding is secured for renewal and/or new works.

Commentary: Council, through the current revitalisation program project, maintain Brookvale Oval as a professional sporting venue. To ensure its continued viability a into the medium to long term significant unfunded upgrades to Brookvale Oval are required. To fund these works and the ongoing costs of renewing the assets a sustainable and long term funding source is required.



- 4. Recognise that funding generated from use of the Oval's facilities will, in all likelihood, only be sufficient to fund maintenance works and therefore other funding sources will need to be found to fund renewal and/or new works.**

Commentary: Alternative sources of funding include grants from State and Federal Government or for the Oval to be self funding. While every effort should be made to attract grant funding, this source of income is not guaranteed. Therefore to avoid rate payer subsidisation, revenue sources such as the sale of naming rights, advertising space, attracting more users and commercialisation of the land classified as general community use and sportsground should be explored. All of these sources of funding have been recommended by the Straight Talk report as avenues to pursue.

- 5. Acknowledge the strong community preferences for future upgrades to not be funded by rate payers.**

Commentary: as mentioned in Recommendation 4 the community shows strong preference for the site to be self funding and not subsidised by rates. Therefore renewals and upgrades which the community have clearly indicated they must be funded from other sources. Straight Talk recommends this includes advertising, selling naming rights and commercial development.

- 6. Recognise the need for the Park, and Oval in particular, to be financially self sufficient and to generate funding to contribute to the cost of its renewal and/or new works, but that it is a community facility and that full cost recovery may not be possible.**

Commentary: Given that full cost recovery is not possible, and as discussed in recommendations 4 and 5, alternative funding sources to secure the long term future of the Oval are required.

Governance, Transparency and Communications

- 7. Consider measures to ensure a more coordinated approach to managing Brookvale Park and Oval.**

Commentary: Recommendation 7 indicates that the community perceives some confusion around who is responsible for what and when in relation to Brookvale Oval. To address this concern Council needs to be proactive and develop marketing initiatives to demonstrate that Brookvale Oval operates like any other reserve or sports field, albeit being the only venue in Warringah with grandstands and function rooms that are available for hire.

- 8. Consider new models for the long term management of the Park that may include:**
- a) **A trust fund to safeguard funding for renewal and/or new works over the long term**
 - b) **An independent management board or other appropriate management structure**
 - c) **A nominated relationship manager who could liaise with the Sea Eagles and underpin a more collaborative approach for the mutual benefit of both the community and the Sea Eagles**
 - d) **Liaison with the advisory Brookvale Park Community Committee to provide an ongoing mechanism for engagement about issues affecting the Park and Oval.**

Commentary: Other similar venues have a Trust model in place (Moore Park, Parramatta Stadium, Energy Australia Stadium), and Council should discuss with them to find out how they operate, what efficiencies could be gained and how well this model achieves long term goals.

Points a and b should be considered when preparing a new Brookvale Park Plan of Management (see Straight Talk Recommendation 26).

Council currently has a sound operational relationship with the Sea Eagles to resolve most issues relating to their license terms. Straight Talk recommend in their report that Council pursue a stronger strategic relationship with the Sea Eagles to develop a coordinated approach to the long term management of Brookvale Oval.

Council has recently adopted a Strategic Reference Group and Community Committee structure that includes a Community Committee for Brookvale Park. Council will consult with this Committee in implementing the recommendations of Straight Talks report.

9. Consider facilitating a process to help establish good working relationships between local Brookvale residents and the Sea Eagles.

Commentary: Council has already constituted a Brookvale Park Community Committee which the residents and Sea Eagles have representation on. This committee serves the purpose of bringing stakeholders together to discuss issue relating to Brookvale Park. Recommendation 10 also specifies developing an Operational Guideline. This Operational Guideline is interpreted as being a way to formally approach the management of traffic and crowd behaviour and disbursement on major event days. This guideline will hopefully, once implemented, help to alleviate many of the concerns of the community and the committee will give them a ongoing avenue for providing feedback.

10. Prepare a new operational guidelines document for use of the Oval in consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Sea Eagles.

Commentary: Recommendation 10 identifies the need to better manage the major events at Brookvale Oval, and the issues those events pose for the local community. This guideline will specify a coordinated approach to the management of traffic and crowd disbursement and behaviour as a priority among other issues.

11. Consider measures to market and promote increased use of the Oval by sporting groups (elite and amateur), school groups and for a range of community events.

Commentary: the perception that Brookvale Oval is exclusively for the use of the Sea Eagles is the most damaging factor in continued fraught relationships between several local residents and the Sea Eagles. Council needs to market Brookvale Oval's availability and the mechanism for booking it more widely. While increased use from local sporting and/ community groups will not appreciably offset maintenance or renewal costs it will provide important facilities for these groups to access.

12. Ensure the booking system for the oval is consistent with the system used for other Council reserve bookings and where possible less cost prohibitive for non commercial users. Make the booking process straightforward for potential users with fees and charges readily accessible on the website, transparency about availability of facilities and clarity about steps in the booking process.

Commentary: the perception that Brookvale Oval is exclusively for the use of the Sea Eagles is the most damaging factor in continued fraught relationships between several local residents and the Sea Eagles. Council needs to market Brookvale Oval's availability and the mechanism for booking it more widely. This recommendation can be addressed through the marketing strategy proposed in Council staff recommendation E.

Character Of Park

- 13. Ensure the surrounding parkland is appropriately maintained, including the playground and other facilities; and protect the 'green and growing' quality of the parkland.**

Commentary: The park land is currently maintained to an appropriate standard for that type of park. However Council should pursue ways to increase the amenity and attractiveness of the park and investigate introducing landscaping features that might help deter anti social behaviour after major events. These improvements might include more BBQ shelters, and increasing open space in the area categorised as Park by amalgamating redundant structures into any upgrades within the Oval.

The Operations Manual should make provision for the impact of major events to have as minimal an impact as possible on the park.

Is it recommended that any proposal that seeks grant funding for upgrades to the Oval also includes embellishments to the Park.

- 14. Consider ways to improve the Oval's facilities to:**

- a) **Not compromise the existing suburban scale or significantly increase the current capacity of the Oval (approximately 23,000).**
- b) **Alter the overall ratio of "seating to standing" by providing additional covered fixed seats and less informal seating and standing.**

Commentary: providing more undercover seating requires increasing the capacity and /or configuration of one or more of the existing stands. Increasing the number of undercover disabled seating is also a legislative requirement. Currently planned works have attempted to address this legislative requirement, but Recommendation 14 can only be properly implemented as part of a major upgrade of the facility.

- 15. Protect the character, amenity and family friendly feel of the Park and Oval with consideration given to retaining most of the eastern hill and northern hill and minimising impact on parkland.**

Commentary: The community has strongly demonstrated its preference for the ground to maintain its current atmosphere while being upgraded to reflect modern standards. It is appropriate that recommendation 15 should be considered as part any upgrade of the Oval. it is noted that there is some potential for conflict between this and other Straight Talk recommendations (14, 16, 19, 20, 21 and 23) however this conflict can be resolved by preparing a new master plan for Brookvale Park as proposed by Straight Talk Recommendation 25.

Future Works And Income Opportunities

- 16. Improve the Oval's facilities to comply with legislative requirements particularly for safety and disability access.**

Commentary: Recommendation 16 is one of the primary aims of Council's current revitalisation program, and compliance with relevant Australian Standards and the Building Code of Australia must be achieved in the current configuration and any new or upgraded facilities. Some essential Australian Standard, Building Code of Australia and Disability Discrimination Act requirements cannot be met within the current configuration of the stands and other facilities at the site. This

evidences the need for further extensive upgrades in order to comply. Complying with these requirements must be a principal aim of the master plan proposed by Straight Talk Recommendation 25.

17. Pursue selling naming rights to generate funding to contribute to the cost of renewal and/or new works, with a strong community preference for 'Brookvale/Brookie' being retained in the name.

Commentary: Recommendation 17 proposes a revenue raising measure that has potential returns for limited investment from Council. The drawback is the cultural attachment the community have to the name Brookvale Oval, but this is something that may be overcome if 'Brookvale' or 'Brookie' remains in the name. An example of this is WIN Jubilee Oval in Kogarah.

Indicative costing indicates this measure has the potential to provide a minor revenue stream to contribute to Brookvale Oval renewal costs.

18. Pursue selling advertising space to generate funding to contribute to the cost of renewal and/or new works.

Commentary: To implement recommendation 18 Council will need to lodge a Development Application to approve any advertising. Advertising would have a more significant day to day physical impact than selling naming rights. Concerns of advertising in the park section are largely unfounded as the market would not put a high enough premium on location facing Alfred St, Federal Pde and Pine Ave to make the effort worthwhile. Indicative costing suggests this option provides a moderate revenue stream to Council.

19. Pursue development along Pittwater Road to generate funding to contribute to making the Park financially self sufficient and undertake detailed design, feasibility assessment, costing analysis and further consultation to achieve this aim. As part of the process consider measures to be sympathetic to the bulk, height and scale of development while ensuring commercial viability.

Commentary: Recommendation 19 is realistically the only option that will secure long term funding for upgrading Brookvale Oval to a standard that meets the the community's preferences and secures its future. Previous feasibility reports have identified that small development contained within the undercroft of the Southern Stand will not be commercially viable. Therefore any development will be significantly different to previous proposals.

It is also important to recognise the strong community preference to retain as much of the 'Park' as possible. Any future development should therefore be limited to land currently categorised as General Community Use or Sportsground.

Straight Talk Recommendation 19 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services C

20. Pursue upgrading the Jane Try Stand north and/or forward.

Commentary: Upgrading and enlarging the Jane Try Stand north and/or forward will help meet several previous recommendations by allowing for more undercover seating, undercover seating for disabled persons and will enable Council to renew and upgrade that north west quadrant of the Oval to a higher level of service and also incorporate opportunities to meet the community's needs. Both options are permissible under the current PoM.



21. Investigate the feasibility of a stand on the eastern hill which preserves as much of the family friendly hill as possible and may incorporate community/commercial uses.

Commentary: An Eastern grand stand is permissible under the current PoM, but the benefits are unlikely to outweigh the costs, particularly in light of the obvious strong community preference for the Eastern Hill to remain.

22. Actively lobby State and Federal government to secure funding to contribute to future upgrades and/or new works.

Commentary: Experience indicates that Council has a much better chance of securing grant funding for projects with an endorsed master plan, for the project to be designed and costed, and for it to include a significant community benefit i.e. employs a multiple use model. Council should therefore only pursue grant funding once we have a clear picture of a future direction.

Council acknowledges recommendations 8 and 9, and will actively pursue a strategic working relationship with the Sea Eagles to work in conjunction on grant applications rather than having parallel efforts.

Straight Talk Recommendation 22 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services B.

23. Consider the feasibility of a 'complete knock down/rebuild of whole site' option for pursuing with Federal and State funding bodies.

Commentary: This recommendation has some merit as it would resolve most of the issues with the current facilities, but is unlikely to come to fruition as this would likely entail an enormous initial and ongoing cost burden on Council even if the significant proportion of the capital investment came from grant funding.

Straight Talk Recommendation 23 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services C.

24. Consider collaborating with other councils who own and maintain ovals used for NRL to lobby for increased funding from television rights.

Commentary: The NRL, as far as can be ascertained, does not provide funding for individual grounds. Television revenue is directed towards the NRL football clubs but the quantum is dictated by the terms of the individual club agreements.

Council should build relationships with other Councils that supply NRL venues to share best practice methods of maintenance, securing grant funding, dealing with operational issues and collectively negotiating with the NRL at a strategic level. This approach has also been recommended by Communities NSW.

Planning Framework

25. Prepare a new master plan to guide future development and a coordinated delivery of renewal and new works.

Commentary: Recommendation 25 is a critical component of the work required to progress the future of Brookvale Park and Oval and especially to enable many of the recommendations of the Straight Talk report.

Straight Talk Recommendation 25 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services C part a.

26. Review the Brookvale Park Plan of Management, planning controls and land classification as required in order to implement the master plan.

Commentary: As the master plan recommended in Straight Talk recommendation 25 is developed to reflect community preferences, then associated documents such as the Brookvale Park Plan of Management will also need to be reviewed in light of its findings. In addition the current PoM is now substantially out of date and doesn't reflect current issues or community preferences.

Straight Talk Recommendation 26 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services C part b.

27. Minimise loss of 'community' land.

Commentary: The consultation process has demonstrated that the community places a high value on the park particularly those areas at the northern end and to a lesser extent the eastern and western sides. This is consistent with their current categorisation under the Act as "Park". To accommodate the high value of this land any future development should be limited to the land currently categorised as General Community Use and Sportsground at the southern end of Brookvale Park.

Straight Talk Recommendation 27 is reflected in Recommendation of the Director Corporate Services C.

Parking And Traffic

28. Ensure any new development incorporates sufficient parking to meet its additional demand.

Commentary: This recommendation must be incorporated into all future designs for new works that increase usage of the site. This is already prescribed by Warringah's current planning controls. It should be noted that additional parking will not alleviate traffic problems on major events days.

29. Consider measures to improve parking and traffic flow during events at Brookvale Oval that may include preparing a match day traffic management plan and other measures such as park and ride.

Commentary: This is a key operational issue that affects local residents during Major Events. Traffic Management should be included in the Operations Manuals for Major Events and consideration given to developing a revised and updated Traffic Management Plan for all of Brookvale, including Major Event days at the Oval.

It is also noted that parking in general in Brookvale is an ongoing issue that is exacerbated on Major Event days.

Summary of Community's views

This extensive community engagement process has given a very clear indication of the community's preferences for the future of Brookvale Oval. There are five main themes that have emerged from Straight Talk's community engagement process:

- Encourage greater community access and use of Brookvale Oval
- Upgrade Brookvale Oval to meet modern standards
- Ensure the Sea Eagles remain for the long term
- Minimal rate payer subsidisation of any renewal, upgrades and/or new works.
- Ensure Brookvale Oval is self sustaining.

To achieve these five main themes Council will implement the actions listed under each recommendation. Specific actions that require a resolution of Council are included in the Recommendations of the Director Corporate Services at the beginning of this report.

If Council resolves to undertake the actions recommended in this report, work will commence immediately to begin preparing all relevant documentation and plans. It is envisaged staff will be in a position to brief Councillors on the initial findings of the planning processes towards the middle of 2011.

Manager Property & Commercial Development

