



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

This will be held on **Wednesday, 21 April 2021, at the Greenwich Sailing Club, Manns Point, at 7.30 pm.** As usual, there will be lots to talk about and your input is welcome. The GCA is exploring all avenues to persuade our council to heed our environmental concerns about the proposed synthetic turf on Bob Campbell Oval; there will be updates from sub committees; and the next project to involve the community - the update of Greenwich wharf - is already garnering lots of comment. So, you are warmly invited to come along and participate, and have a cuppa.

WHERE WE ARE UP TO ON BOB CAMPBELL OVAL (BCO)

Minister Stokes – great to hear that you are to call a review of synthetic sportsgrounds on environmental grounds, but as we are rapidly running out of time we'd like a heads up as to when this might happen.

The community was delighted to read in the SMH on 14 March www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/fake-grass-may-be-greener-but-much-hotter-and-less-friendly-to-environment-20210312-p57a95.html that the Minister for Planning shares the community's concerns about the environmental impacts of synthetic sportsgrounds and that he is to call for a review by his Department. Good timing, given that his own Department is funding nine such grounds in NSW, including \$3.6 million for Bob Campbell Oval.

We have written to the Minister to ask him when this review is to start. We would also like an assurance that he will call a halt to current projects until the review is completed, as it is clear that Lane Cove Council will forge ahead with its plans for a synthetic BCO unless the Minister forces a pause.

Missed opportunity for Councillors to have a re-think about synthetic BCO

On 15 March, the day after the Minister for Planning announced his review of synthetic sportsgrounds, our Councillors had a chance to revisit whether they should proceed with the BCO project as it is planned.

There is no doubt that the community agrees that the playing field needs an upgrade.

A rescission motion authored by Councillors Brooks-Horn, Vissel and Morris offered Councillors the opportunity to explore a quality grass surface as an alternative.

We and Councillors know that the scope of the project can be varied. Council is not locked into a synthetic surface. It has \$3.6 million to create a magnificent natural grass public recreation asset that could be shared by everyone in the community.

Sadly, the rescission motion was lost with Councillors Brooks-Horn, Vissel, Morris and Zbik voting to rescind and the Mayor and Councillors Strassberg, Brent and Bennison voting to retain the synthetic surface.

Why is the BCO project being rushed when work will not start until next year?

At the last Council meeting the Mayor assured the community that Council is in "very early stages of design" and that "we are definitely just at stage one in our plans and there's a long way to go yet".

This is hard to reconcile with the fact that Councillors did not vote to pause the BCO project to consider the outcomes of the Minister's review nor did they vote to push back the timeline that Council has nominated to accept tenders for BCO – **31 May – just 6 weeks away!**

We have yet to see any designs for BCO,

or technical reports, or a comprehensive review of environmental factors and yet Council is planning to have tender documents out, assessed and Council approved by 31 May.

Given advice to Councillors at their March meeting that Council does have some plastic run off from synthetic grounds at Blackman Park, it is extremely concerning that the construction of a synthetic ground in the environmentally sensitive Gore Creek Reserve is so rushed.

The vexed question of what constitutes 'appropriate consultation' is being raised yet again. Some revelations in answers to Budgets Estimates questions

Following contact with a Greenwich resident, David Shoebridge MLC met with community members at BCO to better understand what is proposed by Council. Mr Shoebridge is working closely with the Save Gardiner Park group who is battling to save its grassed space from becoming synthetic, also with funds provided by the Department of Planning under the Precinct Support Scheme.

Mr Shoebridge picked up a common theme in the BCO and Gardiner Park stories – flawed community consultation (and at the wrong times) and, as he said in the SMH article, "the perverse outcome of seeing funding that's designed to increase green open space instead reducing their access to nature and open space".

In its project nomination, Council painted a glowing picture of what BCO means to the community: "It is heavily used by locals for a wide range of informal active and passive recreational activities every day and evening throughout the year and has a key role in developing and maintaining strong community links".

Despite Council knowing that BCO means many things to many people in the community, it chose to consult with

just one local stakeholder, the Greenwich Sports Club (and two district and state football associations) about its plans before lodging its nomination.

One of the assessment criteria for approval of funds under the Department's Precinct Support Scheme is that "appropriate consultation has occurred within the community".

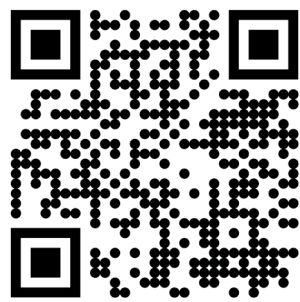
Mr Shoebridge used the Budget Estimates hearing on 9 March to ask the Minister for Planning how his Department had approved the BCO grant with evidence of such limited consultation.

The answer came back three weeks later - "The Department assesses council's nomination on the basis that appropriate consultation has occurred". QONS - Hon Rob Stokes.pdf (nsw.gov.au) p 16

The funds involved in the Precinct Support Scheme are significant. It is hard to understand how discussions with just one of many known stakeholders can support approval of this level of funding.

Gardiner Park Webinar

Talking of Gardiner Park, we thought their flyer sums up beautifully the arguments against synthetic surfaces, so (with our necessary edits) here it is. Note the invitation to their webinar, **Astroturf, Greenwashing and Public Space**, the day after our meeting, on **Thursday 22 April**, streaming from Parliament House at **6.30pm**. Join via the QR code, which will lead to their FB page.



SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS - 10 REASONS AGAINST

1) HEAT - Both the plastic grass blades and black crumb rubber infill absorb and trap heat. The fields then heat up escalating when the temperature reaches 27 degrees in high humidity.

2) MAINTENANCE - Councils will lose their warranty and risk less life span if they don't follow the extensive maintenance protocol, such as sweeping, grooming, applying algacide, domestic

weed killers and detergents to remove stains.

3) ENVIRONMENT - Natural grass acts as a carbon sink and requires mowing and fertiliser use. Synthetic grass is made from petrochemicals and uses more energy to manufacture.

4) LANDFILL - The plastic grass layer requires replacing every 8 to 10 years at current costs of \$500-800,000. All synthetic turf in Australia ends up in landfill.

5) BIO-DIVERSITY - Natural grass fields provide a food source for birds such as magpies, lapwings and cockatoos. The reduction in foraging areas for these birds has an impact further up the food chain, including the Powerful Owl.

6) STORMS - During heavy rain extra water run-off is generated because synthetic surfaces do not absorb water.

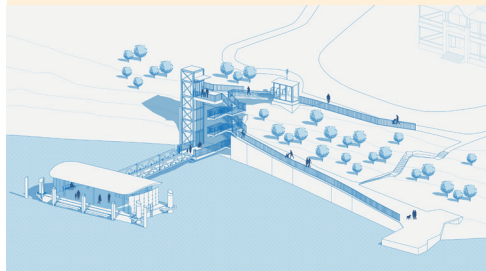
7) CHEMICALS - Infill made of crumbed rubber tyres leeches chemicals and it needs to be topped up as 5-10% is lost from movement, weather and wind.

8) INJURY - Playing on synthetic turf can impact existing injuries and recovery time, especially in older players. Natural grass is better for all players.

9) TOO BRIGHT - The light reflection from synthetics means that the fields are brighter than real grass. This adds to the heat and health risks to players and viewers.

10) USAGE - Grass fields usage is estimated at 20 hours per week. Synthetic can be used 40 to 80 hours, intensifying the usage for organised sport and reducing availability for active recreation for residents.

GREENWICH WHARF TO BE UPGRADED



As part of the Transport Access Program, Sydney wharves are being upgraded, and now it's Greenwich's turn. The infirm and the elderly are the most disadvantaged by the current wharf design, so the upgrades are aiming to

improve access for these groups.

The main proposed design concepts include: a new floating pontoon; a new lift and stairs; new bicycle parking hoops; new waiting area, gangway and jetty; and a relocating of the bus stop closer to the stairs and lift.

Have Your Say by attending drop in sessions at Mary Carlson Park, Lower Serpentine Rd (near the wharf) on the following dates: Sunday, 18 April between midday and 3 pm, and Thursday 22 April between 2 and 5pm. We are also invited to provide feedback on the proposed design by **5pm Wednesday 5 May 2021** by completing an online survey on nswroads.work/greenwichwharf. This website also provides more detailed information on the design.

ST GILES PLAY GROUP

Great that people can meet again!! This small, friendly group welcomes babies and children in the care of their mothers, fathers, grandparents or nannies, every **Tuesday** during school term. Tea and coffee are provided; just bring a piece of fruit per child to share. Meet at: **St Giles Church, 6 Greendale St, Greenwich, from 9.30 am to 11.30 am.**

Fee: \$3 per day for casuals. If you decide to come regularly there is an annual fee of \$25, which decreases per term.

Contact: Robin Lupton on 0407 064 912

JOIN THE GCA OR RENEW

Yes, it's that time again! We need your money as well as your goodwill. We have heaps of the latter (thank you) but not so much of the former. If you haven't joined or renewed for this year, please do so promptly. Our remittance details are as follows: Mail to GCA Inc, PO Box 5057, Greenwich 2065; deposit into our box at the pharmacy; pay direct to our bank BSB 062247, Ac/No 10104085 (don't forget to include your name as reference). Many thanks.

STAY IN TOUCH

Ideally, we'd like all Greenwich residents to join. At least keep up to date by joining our mailing list by emailing John Southwood on jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au.

Merri Southwood,
President 0412 361 331