



Dear Community Member

The evening of 1 July was cold but over 50 community members felt so strongly about Lane Cove Council’s approach to community engagement on major issues that they filled the Lane Cove Golf Club auditorium to its COVID-19 capacity.

This broadcast is to give community members a sense of the mood of the meeting.

Many speakers, including several who are not regulars at our GCA meetings, spoke strongly about what we have sensed since late 2017.

Our Council progresses major developments long before it engages the community in the process and, when consultation finally happens, the views of the community seem to count for little with Lane Cove Council.

The underpinning principles of Council’s Community Engagement Policy and Community Participation Plan are being undermined as Council pushes ahead with its own developments on many fronts.

And when community “consultation” is finally initiated, community members find that their carefully considered submissions are, at best, compiled into Council reports with no real analysis and with no follow up consultation or engagement.

Community consultation rarely results in changes to plans that Council had in mind

The three items on the agenda on 1 July are cases in point.

St Leonards South

Despite the hundreds of submissions made to Council after the Nov 2017- Jan 2018 exhibition of the SLS Plan, not once did Council report on these submissions or initiate engagement with those who made submissions with a view to addressing their clearly and carefully articulated concerns.

And, again, after the damning findings of the IPC, Council failed to initiate any engagement process.

Community members have written hundreds of letters and emails to Council and attended Council meetings in an effort to engage with all Councillors on the implications of the SLS development.

The voice of the community has got stronger and stronger but this did not prompt a change of approach.

An extraordinary meeting to decide the future of SLS was called for 11 May 2020, at a time when community members could not participate in the process.

The community was refused the right to a community consultation process on the Mayor's ruling that it was illegal, a clear signal to the community about Council's lack of commitment to the principles of its own Community Engagement Policy.

<http://ecouncil.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/trim/DocumentLink.asp?Recid=44073/17>

We now have to depend on the Department of Planning to finalise a SLS Plan that is more aligned to community priorities.

Bob Campbell Oval (BCO)

Here we have a situation where Council has developed a Master Plan for Bob Campbell Oval that the community has not even seen.

This plan was used to support an application for a \$3 million grant from the Department of Planning under a scheme where grants are made for infrastructure to accommodate population increase when sites are re-zoned in a Priority Precinct Area ie St Leonards and Crows Nest area.

As far as we are aware, SLS has not been re-zoned but the grant application was approved.

Rather than create adequate open space to accommodate the thousands of people that Council's SLS Plan would add to East Ward's population, Council proposes to re-purpose this existing and cherished community space.

The grant application refers to community consultation on the BCO Master Plan (the one that Council submitted to support its grant application) that will not start until August - November – has the cart not already been put before the horse?

The application says that Council has endorsed the plan. Who endorsed it and when?

A synthetic surface is listed as a possibility for either Bob Campbell Oval or Blackman Park in Council's 2008 Recreation Action Plan. An oval at Blackman Park has been re-surfaced but we are unaware of any Council resolution to formally endorse the re-surfacing of Bob Campbell Oval or the many consequential equipment/dog walking layout changes proposed to flow from it.

It is clear from discussion at the GCA meeting that Bob Campbell Oval meets the

walkers, family groups, unstructured sport etc.

For this reason, a Master Plan for the oval and its surrounds warrants widespread community engagement.

Work should not be driven by the fact that a grant has been approved based on a plan the community has not seen.

The following resolution was passed at the 1 July meeting:-

- 1. The community registers its concern that the Master Plan for Bob Campbell Oval was not the subject of community consultation before it was submitted to the Department of Planning Industry and Environment in support of a grant application under the Precinct Support Scheme*
- 2. It calls upon Council to immediately publish its Master Plan for Bob Campbell Oval and to commence genuine community consultation and engagement with the community about the proposed works in the Master Plan*
- 3. This consultation should include site meetings at the Bob Campbell Oval and links to all relevant Council documents relating to open space and recreational land management*
- 4. Consultation should be undertaken for a period of at least 6 weeks*
- 5. No works to implement the Master Plan to commence until after full community consultation and engagement has been completed.*

Proposed major changes to Lane Cove Golf Club site – Council’s “Sport and Recreation Precinct”

Council is proposing to develop a Sport and Recreation Precinct (SRP) on what the community has long known as the Golf Club site. It is another plan that has

Having met for the last time in 2018, Council's Recreation Precinct Liaison Advisory Committee was surprised to be shown Council's plans for the SRP just a week before Council's 16 March 2020 meeting. The golf driving range and putt putt course in the plans (with consequent reduction in par rating and length of the current golf course) had not been raised with the committee members at all until then.

Clearly Council had progressed the SRP plans internally to allow a vote at its 18 May 2020 meeting to "*utilise debt (a \$20 million loan from TCorp over 10 years) as part of the funding strategy for the*" SRP project.

At its 15 June meeting a report to Council stated that "*The opportunity to access debt at 0.9% interest via a loan from TCorp for the Sports and Recreation Precinct is appropriate, particularly as this infrastructure will provide a revenue stream to assist in repayment of the debt*".

So, again, a project well advanced before anyone in the community hears about it.

And one that seems to be driven by the same issues that have driven the Bob Campbell Oval proposal – increased residential development in Council controlled St Leonards.

There was significant concern raised at the meeting around, not only the changes to the golf course, but the level of expenditure Council is undertaking at an uncertain time.

The following resolution was passed that reflects this:-

1. The community demands that Council meets its responsibility to undertake genuine consultation and engagement with all stakeholders in relation to the Concept Plans for the Sport

- 2. The consultation to be in the form of a number of public meetings, not electronic presentations, to be held at times and locations convenient to the community*
- 3. Council to provide, as part of the consultation, indicative costings for the project, including the expenses incurred to date, a copy of a cost/benefit analysis and a copy of the feasibility report*
- 4. The consultation period shall be for a period of no less than 6 weeks*
- 5. In the event that Council decides to proceed with the Sport and Recreation Precinct, as proposed or as altered subsequent to the community consultation, it will convene and work with an advisory committee of key community stakeholders in the delivery of the project.*

On 3 July 2020, two days after the GCA meeting, Council put the SRP Concept Plan out for community consultation.

<http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/CouncilConsultations/Pages/SportandRecreationPrecinct.aspx>

Council will hold two drop - in sessions at the Golf Club on Saturday 25 July and 1 August between 9:00am – 11:00am

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SUNDAY 16 AUGUST.

At the 16 March meeting, when Council approved the Concept Plans to go on exhibition, all Councillors supported the inclusion of a second option to go on display that *“eliminates any changes to the golf course except the first hole, which remains a par 3 hole”*.

There is plenty of detail on the Council website about the option that includes the driving range and putt putt but where are the plans and detail for the option Councillors voted to include at the 16 March meeting (ie no putt putt or driving range)? – we can't find them.

The website does not include details about where to send/email submissions.

We will seek Council's clarification as to the location of material about the second option and where to send submissions in the hope that they can be included on the Council website.

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