



# Greenwich Community Association Inc

PO Box 5057, Greenwich, NSW 2065

## Submission to Synthetic Turf Study

The Greenwich Community Association Inc (GCA) participated in the workshop conducted by Ethos Urban on 27 May 2021.

This submission supplements the input of the GCA representatives at the workshop.

### How are your local fields used? Is there a mixture of formalised and informal recreation and cultural uses? What are the positive / negative aspects?

There is only one local field in Greenwich – Bob Campbell Oval that is part of Gore Creek Reserve.

The reserve is located in a bushland setting adjacent to Lane Cove River. (**Attachment A and Attachment B**).

The reserve is Crown Land for public recreation.

It is used for a mixture of active and passive recreation. (**Attachment C**)

Lane Cove Council's opening paragraph in its project nomination for funding of a synthetic surface on Bob Campbell Oval summarised the value to the community of Bob Campbell Oval well.

*Bob Campbell Oval is used for community sports, primarily football (soccer) in winter and cricket in summer. 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.***

The irony of the proposal to create a synthetic field in place of the current grassed field is that the community will lose the very benefits Lane Cove Council has described so well.

The reserve is used for dog walking, jogging, bushwalk access, yoga, children on bikes, soccer training and competition, junior and senior cricket, passive recreation.

The reserve is also the venue for the Greenwich Village Games which brings together about 2000 community members for a sporting and cultural event.

There are no negative aspects of its current use.

All activities occur simultaneously and the open space at the reserve is shared harmoniously between users.

There is no tension between sporting groups and other community members using the reserve for non- competitive sport purposes.

**Some** footballers find that the grassed surface is not suitable for competitive play but there has been no study conducted by Lane Cove Council to explore the installation of a natural turf ground.

#### Attachment A



Attachment B





Attachment C





### **What impact has the increased adoption of synthetic turf fields had within your community?**

- **Environmental**
- **Social**
- **Economic**

#### **Blackman Park -known impacts**

The only synthetic field in the Lane Cove LGA is Blackman Park which was completed In 2014.

Whilst emphasising that the GCA is not in favour of synthetic grounds except in compelling cases, Blackman Park works well as there is still a huge area of grassed open space for passive/recreational use and capacity for a large number of vehicles.(**Attachment D**)

Concerns as to the environmental impacts of the synthetic pitches at Blackman Park have surfaced in the past year:-

#### **Run-off of rubber infill particles into Lane Cove River**

This was confirmed by the Executive Manager-Open Space and Urban Services in Council's March 2021 meeting.

An independent analysis of the rubber particles is in progress.

#### **Degradation of mangroves in Lane Cove River caused by sediment run off from synthetic pitch (Attachment E)**

#### **Bob Campbell Oval – anticipated impacts**

##### **Social impacts**

- **Importance of physical context and capacity of site to meet all needs**

Given the anticipated high level of usage of the synthetic oval by sporting groups and the reluctance of many to engage in recreation on plastic surfaces ( on the limited occasions that the oval will be available), it is inequitable to locate synthetic sportsfields in open spaces that are not large enough to provide adequate usable grassed space for active and passive recreational use concurrently with use of the oval.

The synthetic sportsground at Bob Campbell Oval will dominate Gore Creek Reserve and fragment all other activities.

#### **(Attachment F)**

The attempt to meet the needs of one user (soccer) will destroy the amenity of the reserve for others.

There will be compartmentalisation of activities which mitigates against social cohesion eg the dog walking area and the children's playground are at opposite ends of the ground and separated by a solid structure.

People will have to choose between activities because elements are not linked.

Furthermore, the impacts on adjoining residents of extended periods of lighting, noise and traffic must be considered.

- Usage projections must be realistic and equity of access for other community members must be addressed

Lane Cove Council has specified in its tender documentation that the sportsground is to cater for 60 hours a week of team sport for 50 weeks of the year.

It is not appropriate to justify the need for a synthetic surface by reference to demand projections that are unrealistic and cannot be met by supporting infrastructure.

The REF for the synthetic Bob Campbell Oval depicts a false calculation of the areas of usable green space that will be available to the community after the synthetic field has been installed. [TRIM Tender documentation - Bob Campbell Oval - Review of Environmental Factors\\_1531000.PDF \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) p 12

## Table 2

### Area by user group User Group

Space Carparking 51 spaces

Cricket / Soccer 5376 m2 (ground will be unavailable for senior cricket and too small for senior soccer competition play)

Passive Recreation / Dog walking 4800 m2 (disingenuous to call the dog walking area a passive recreation area )

Netball – training area 435 m2

Passive Recreation / Picnic and Playground 1716 m (disingenuous to call playground a passive recreation area )

### Environmental impacts

The environmental impacts of synthetic sportsfields are well documented and have been addressed in other submissions.

The GCA considers that synthetic turf must be a last, not first, resort when addressing increased usage demands.

The recent assertions by the synthetic turf industry that the new no-infill 4G technology addresses environmental impacts of synthetic turf are untested in Australian conditions and rigorous assessment must be undertaken to verify the claims made by the industry.

The impacts of synthetic turf in terms of loss of habitat, effect of light spill, noise and heat on native fauna and the migration of plastic, rubber particles and chemicals into waterways must be thoroughly investigated before any further synthetic sportsgrounds are installed.

It is inappropriate that proponents of synthetic sportsfields (normally Councils) are also the parties charged with making Part 5 assessments under the EP&A Act.



Such assessments should be made against published standards and conducted by independent assessing authorities.

### Economic Impacts

It is appropriate that a user group that enjoys almost exclusive use of the bulk of a community space should bear a significant proportion of the the cost of maintaining and replacing a synthetic sportsfield and the cost of disposal /recycling of the synthetic turf that has been removed from a site.

Lane Cove Council has provided no detail in this regard.

### Attachment D



### Attachment E



# Bob Campbell Oval



## Legend

- 1 New synthetic field to house soccer (90m x 50m) and Cricket (75m x 117m)
- 2 Existing Native Bushland
- 3 Circulation Path
- 4 Large dogs - Dog Park
- 5 Small dogs - Dog Park
- 6 Proposed new amenities building
- 7 Proposed updated carpark
- 8 Link to existing bush track
- 9 Proposed new native vegetation area
- 10 Existing aqueduct
- 11 Proposed new playground with circulation path
- 12 Proposed BBQ picnic area
- 13 Existing vehicular access road and shared user access path
- 14 Proposed upgraded lighting for field

### **How can we better balance competing open space needs for different community groups?**

In cases where there is a limited amount of green open space (eg urban renewal areas), focus on needs of **all** user groups.

When assessing the needs of competitive sporting groups ensure that :-

- usage projections are not inflated
- infrastructure eg public transport, parking capacity can service increased demand
- there is no impact on native flora, fauna and waterways
- the impact on amenity of adjacent residents is minimised by balanced usage.

Synthetic should be used only as last resort and in locations that are not environmentally sensitive.

Identify sites that are suitable for competitive sport only – roof tops of buildings, industrial sites etc

Focus on development of natural turf solutions that meet the needs of all.

### **What practices are currently in place to manage fields within your local area? Could these be improved and if so, how?**

There is a perception that the grassed surface at Bob Campbell Oval has been neglected because Lane Cove Council has wanted to replace it with a synthetic surface for a long time.

Details of measures taken to maintain the current grassed surface are not supported by independent reports.

Lane Cove Council has not undertaken a full study of natural turf alternatives to a synthetic ground at Bob Campbell Oval.

### **Are there any alternative turf technological solutions and/or management techniques available that enable an increase in usage? If so, where are these, what have been the benefits / outcomes?**

In a location where open green space is limited, it is vital to appropriately fund the installation of a surface that meets the needs of all users at the same time as accommodating increased but realistic usage demands.

The improved turf installation and management techniques of experts such as Dr Mick Battam should be fully explored.

The GCA will provide further information to the review if so requested.

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