



City of
DAREBIN

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Multi Sport Stadium Consultation Summary

Draft Report

August 2015



Prepared by SGL Consulting Group Australia Pty Ltd



sgl

www.sglgroup.net



SGL Consulting Group Australia Pty Ltd

Adelaide

2a Mellor St
West Beach SA 5024
Phone: +61 (08) 8235 0925
Fax: +61 (08) 8353 1067
Email: sa@sglgroup.net

Brisbane

PO Box 713
Mount Gravatt
Queensland 4122
Mobile: +61 (0) 416 235 235
Email: queensland@sglgroup.net

Melbourne

Level 6, 60 Albert Road
South Melbourne VIC 3205
Phone: +61 (03) 9698 7300
Fax: +61 (03) 9698 7301
Email: victoria@sglgroup.net

Perth

19 Clayton Street
East Fremantle WA 6158
Phone: +61 (0) 8 9319-8991
Mobile: +61 (0) 407 901 636
Email: gmcneill@sglgroup.net

Sydney

1/273 Alfred St Nth
North Sydney NSW 2060
Mobile: +61 (04) 17 536 198
Email: mking@sglgroup.net

SGL also has offices in:

- Auckland
- Christchurch
- Wellington

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Summary of Community Consultation and Feedback	2
2.1	Key Stakeholder Discussions	2
2.1.1	State Government - Sport and Recreation Victoria	2
2.1.2	Basketball Victoria	3
2.1.3	Netball Victoria	3
2.1.4	Football Federation Victoria	3
2.1.5	Darebin Basketball	3
2.1.6	Darebin Netball Association	4
2.2	Neighbouring Municipalities	4
2.2.1	Moreland City Council	4
2.2.2	Yarra City Council	5
2.2.3	Banyule City Council	5
2.2.4	Boroondara City Council	5
2.2.5	Hume City Council	5
2.3	Tenant Clubs/Users of Mayer Park	6
2.3.1	Darebin United Soccer Club	6
2.3.2	Fiji Victorian Cricket Club	6
2.3.3	Croxton Special School	6
2.4	Internal Focus Group	7
2.5	Community Information and Consultation Sessions	8
2.6	Community Survey	8
2.6.1	Response Rate	8
2.6.2	Involvement in Team Sports	9
2.6.3	Most Used Indoor Sports Facilities	9
2.6.4	Would the Proposed Stadium Increase Sports Participation	10
2.6.5	Potential Location for Indoor Stadium	10
2.6.6	Other Issues	11
2.7	Written Submissions	11
2.8	Petition	12
3	Conclusion	13
3.1	Introduction	13
3.1.1	Need for Additional Indoor/Outdoor Sports Facilities	13
3.1.2	Mayer Park	13
3.1.3	Possible Locations	13

Directory of Graphs

GRAPH 1: INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM SPORTS	8
GRAPH 2: INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM SPORTS	8
GRAPH 3: FACILITIES MOST LIKELY TO BE USED	9
GRAPH 4: INCREASE IN SPORT PARTICIPATION RATES IF NEW STADIUM PROVIDED	9
GRAPH 5: POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR INDOOR SPORTS STADIUM	10

Appendices

APPENDIX ONE:	Community Information Session 3 June 2015
APPENDIX TWO:	Community Information Session 13 June 2015

1 Introduction

Over the past twelve months the City of Darebin has undertaken extensive research into the current and future needs for sporting and recreation facilities. The Major Regional Sports Facility Feasibility Study completed in 2014 identified a lack of both indoor and outdoor sports courts, particularly to the south of the municipality to service both the current and future needs for sports such as netball, basketball, volleyball, badminton and indoor soccer (futsal).

Darebin currently has only one public indoor sport facility (4 indoor courts and 3 outdoor courts) located at Reservoir District Secondary School operated as part of a joint use agreement with the Department of Education and Training. There are also a number of limited single court indoor and outdoor facilities on school land.

Recent studies have identified that a large number of residents are required to travel outside of the municipality to participate in sporting activities due to the lack of locally provided facilities. Netball Victoria statistics show that the average Netball participation rate in Darebin is 0.7%, far below the state average of 2.3%. The studies further identified the growth in netball participation that has occurred over the past two to three years. The need for access to quality netball facilities in the south was reported to Council in 2014 and supported by a resident's petition signed by 1000 people. The state government also identified the lack of outdoor netball courts in the northern metropolitan region and has provided \$9.6M as an election promise with the aim of developing an additional 64 outdoor netball courts across the inner north.

In response to the need for additional outdoor netball courts Council commissioned a feasibility study into potential sites for the development of the outdoor multi use sports courts south of Bell Street. The review considered 20 potential sites against an agreed set of site criteria.

Based on the feasibility work Council proposes to develop a new indoor/outdoor facility that will act as a hub for Darebin highball sports, particularly catering for women's sport and with the capacity to service the entire municipality. The proposed facility will include the following components:

- Up to 4 mixed-use outdoor courts
- 3 indoor mixed-use sports courts, including 1 show court
- Retractable spectator seating for show court
- Amenities (change rooms, toilets)
- Administration areas
- Car parking to service the facility
- Lighting for outdoor courts and car parks

The anticipated order of cost for the proposed developed prepared by Mantic Architects is approximately \$13M. The proposed funding strategy to develop the facility includes a partnership arrangement between Council and the state government.

2 Summary of Community Consultation and Feedback

Given the scale and significance of the proposed developed Council implemented a community consultation process in line with the 'Darebin Community Engagement Framework'. The community consultation was undertaken over an eight-week period between 18 May and 10 July 2015. Council wished to encourage as many residents as possible to take part in the consultation and provide feedback on the size, scale, and best location for the development. The community consultation included the following:

- Key stakeholder discussions
- Information and consultation letter sent to 10,500 residents
- Community survey (available online and hard copy at libraries, leisure centre's and Council's Customer Service Centre's) – 1,089 responses
- Leader newspaper references to the project between 26 May and 10 July -12 separate articles
- Darebin Community News article – June/July Edition 2015 – circulated to all households in Darebin
- Two Community Information and Consultation Sessions June 2015 – 110 attendees over 2 sessions
- 2,400 visits to "Your Say" (area of website the stadium content featured) between 26 May and 10 July
- Two Facebook posts on 8 and 12 June, reaching 5,586 and 773 respectively. Average reach of posts is 700-1000.
- Meeting with direct site users to gauge their feedback from an early stage
- Officer presentation at five Darebin advisory committees
- Internal consultation meeting with 14 senior officers
- Consultation information sent to over 60 Darebin sports clubs
- Consultation fliers available at libraries, customer service centres, 3 health centres, Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, neighbourhood houses, leisure centres, golf courses, Bundoora Park.
- Direct consultation with at least 10 sporting associations, leagues and state bodies
- Letter to the Hon. Fiona Richardson MP.
- Directly liaised with 5 neighbouring Council's.

SGL Consulting Group was commissioned to assist Council with the consultation of both internal and external key stakeholders. The following report provides a summary of the key issues identified through the consultation process. A **Volume Two – Written Comments** report has also been developed to collate the written comments provided via the community consultation and engagement process.

2.1 Key Stakeholder Discussions

One on one discussion was held with a range of key stakeholders during the consultation period. The following provides a summary of the key issues identified.

2.1.1 State Government - Sport and Recreation Victoria

Sport and Recreation Victoria are supportive of the development of sporting and recreation facilities that encourage increase participation in active and healthy lifestyle.

The proposed outdoor netball courts align with the state government election promise of \$9.6M for the development of outdoor netball courts in the northern region. The state government is in the process of determining the means by which the funds are distributed across the northern region.

It is important for the state government representative to be fully informed of the proposed development and that Council officers make a presentation to the department on the needs and requirements of the proposed facility.

Any funding provided through Sport and Recreation Victoria will be based on sound evidence based local and regional planning studies.

2.1.2 Basketball Victoria

There is an identified shortage of indoor sports courts to support basketball associations and clubs in the Darebin area.

The Darebin Basketball Association operates primarily in the north of the City and is made up of representative basketball teams with limited domestic basketball teams. Membership has declined over the past 5 years. Basketball Victoria would like to work with the Association to consider opportunities to amalgamate with an association in a neighbouring municipality.

Basketball Victoria is supportive of the proposed three court indoor stadium to be built in the south of the municipality and would be interested in working with Council and the local clubs and associations to develop programs and user agreements.

2.1.3 Netball Victoria

Netball Victoria is supportive of the proposed development of 3 indoor courts and 4 outdoor courts within the south of Darebin.

Netball Victoria and Basketball Victoria have been working together to access additional courts for both basketball and netball across metropolitan Melbourne. The State government election promise of \$9.6M to support the development of 64 additional netball courts across the northern metropolitan region will assist the growth and participation of netball.

Netball Victoria has also been in discussions with the Football Federation of Victoria. The discussion with the CEO indicated that they are open to discussing the options and opportunities for the development of courts at the John Cain Reserve.

2.1.4 Football Federation Victoria

Football Federation Victoria (FFV) are supportive of the proposed development of multi sports stadium and have indicated the Darebin International Sports Centre (DISC) at John Cain Memorial Park, at which they are a key tenant, would be a suitable site.

FFV is a strong supporter of multi sports stadiums in general. They have indicated that they are aware of the need to work with other sporting partners in the development of facilities for community use and see benefits for the local soccer clubs and associations.

FFV would like to continue to be involved in the development of concept plans if John Cain was identified as the preferred site.

2.1.5 Darebin Basketball

The Darebin Basketball Association (DBA) is based at the Darebin Community Sports Centre in Reservoir. Over the past three years participation in the junior representative program has decreased significantly. The representative program on Friday night has declined from 25 teams (250 players) to 3 teams (30 players) over the three-year period.

The association is attempting to rebuild the membership base through the domestic competition that play at the Darebin Centre, within the Whittlesea Basketball Association competition structure. The DBA now has the following teams:

- 13 Junior domestic teams - U8 - U16 = 104 players
- Senior men's Monday night 21 teams = 147 players
- Mixed comp Sunday night 10 teams= 70 players
- No senior women's teams
- Aussie hoops programs – 35 – 50 participants

Ivanhoe Knights basketball club who are looking at opportunities to create an alliance for representative teams has approached the association. Darebin do not believe at this time the alliance will be suitable for their members.

The cost of the stadium has impacted the viability and sustainability of the association. There is some concern that there are already a number of associations that Darebin competes with for players. If a new association were to be established at a new facility this would have a further impact on Darebin membership.

There is the potential for some of the local clubs such as Alphington and Shooters Basketball Clubs to come under the umbrella of Darebin – question is where people channel for rep basketball.

Any new facility should be developed in a location that does not encroach on the Darebin Basketball Association catchment.

2.1.6 Darebin Netball Association

The Darebin Netball Association (DNA) is based at the Darebin Community Sports Centre. There has been a significant decline in participation from previous years due to new competitions coming from neighbouring venues such as RMIT Bundoora, Banyule NETS in addition to administrative difficulties with the former committee.

Parkside Netball Club was formed in 2014 following the establishment of a Net Set Go program based at Fairfield Primary School. The netball club have linked in with the Parkside Sports Club which includes junior football, cricket, FIDA football and veterans cricket. In 2014 there were 80 primary school aged girls and 8 secondary girls participating in the program, there are now in excess of 100 participants. There is strong interest from girls in Years 7, 8 and 9 however they are unable to be accommodated due to a lack of possible training facilities.

The proposal to develop a combination of indoor and outdoor sports courts is strongly supported by the netball clubs. The ideal location for the facility should be somewhere that it does not have a detrimental impact on residents or other sporting/recreation club users.

2.2 Neighbouring Municipalities

Discussions were held with Council officers in Recreation Departments from neighbouring municipalities. The following provides a summary of the key issues:

2.2.1 Moreland City Council

Within the City of Moreland there are three indoor stadiums including

- Coburg - 2 courts
- Oak park - 1 court
- Brunswick - 1 court
- Fawkner community hall – 1 court

The Moreland facilities are old and outdated and currently operated by committees of management.

Council is currently identifying existing and proposed future sites for netball in order to capitalise upon funding via the state government election promise funds. The future proposed courts will be multi use courts suitable for netball and tennis.

The Recreation Strategy completed in 2014 did not identify indoor courts as a priority – priority for Moreland is to work with schools for the provision of outdoor courts.

Council have funding in the 2016/2017 budget for the development of 2 outdoor courts at the Oak Park facility, which are not set to service the residents of Darebin. There are no plans to upgrade or develop any new indoor courts in Moreland due to limited space and funds.

Moreland are supportive of the proposed development and do not believe it will have an impact on Moreland facilities given the lack on indoor courts in the region.

2.2.2 Yarra City Council

Yarra City Council have long identified the need for additional indoor sports courts and have identified the former Gas and Fuel site on Alexander Avenue as the preferred site. The site is not yet available for development and there are currently no indications of when a facility could be constructed.

Council has been working with the Collingwood Basketball Association to identify potential location for additional indoor courts. The Collingwood College is currently the preferred site. It is proposed to redevelop the existing courts and build 2 new courts to create a 3 court facility. The Principal of the school is supportive of the proposal.

If courts were developed in the south of Darebin residents of Yarra would make use of the facilities.

2.2.3 Banyule City Council

Banyule City Council has identified the need for additional indoor courts and have committed to develop 4-6 courts on the former Banksia Secondary College site. Concept plans are being prepared. Council has allocated \$7M within the 2016/2017 however there is a funding gap of approximately \$4.5M. Council is currently working on a funding strategy to enable the 4-court facility development to proceed.

The indoor court strategy is aimed at a consolidation of courts at one venue. The strategy includes closing down undersized courts and consolidating courts at the former Banksia College site.

Council is talking to Macleod Secondary College, home of Banyule Nets, 4 indoor netball courts about the possibility of developing 4 outdoor netball courts to increase the capacity for netball.

Banyule would like the City of Darebin to partner with them in providing regional funding towards the feasibility for the Northern Region Employment Cluster project.

2.2.4 Boroondara City Council

Boroondara have identified a lack of indoor sports courts to service the needs of basketball and netball. The Boroondara Sports Complex is currently being redeveloped to include one additional court and considering the joint development of a two-court facility as part of the Swinburne Secondary College.

The proposed stadium in Darebin would be supported by Boroondara Council as it may relieve some of the pressure on Boroondara facilities.

2.2.5 Hume City Council

The Hume City Council recently redeveloped the indoor sports courts at the Craigieburn Leisure and Aquatic Centre to provide a 5 court facility.

The proposed stadium in Darebin would be supported by Hume Council.

2.3 Tenant Clubs/Users of Mayer Park

A discussion was held with the current tenant sporting clubs at Mayer Park. The following provides a summary of the key issues.

2.3.1 Darebin United Soccer Club

Darebin United Soccer Club currently has a membership of approximately 120 players and 6 officials. The club includes the following teams:

- 1 x senior men - State 3 North West
- 1 x men's reserves - State League 3 North West
- Thirds – Metro 5's
- 1 x women's – Division 4
- 1 x Junior male - U14's D
- Mini Roos - (4 to 9 yrs of age)

The club train at Mayer Park on a Tuesday and Thursday evening and compete on a Saturday and Sunday.

Over the past two years the Club has grown from two teams to 5 teams. FFV is working in collaboration with the club to promote the activities to the local catchment to attract more players.

If the proposed stadium is developed at Mayer Park it will displace the soccer club. The Club would be forced to fold or find an alternate location, of which there are limited options.

The club is supportive of the need for an indoor stadium in Darebin that could be used for indoor soccer programs (futsal). The development of a facility should not result in a loss of open space and should be developed on an industrial site or at DISC.

2.3.2 Fiji Victorian Cricket Club

The Fijian Victorian Cricket Club currently has a membership of approximately 40 players. The club includes 2 x senior men's teams that compete in the Northern Metropolitan Cricket Association

The club train at Mayer Park on a Tuesday and Thursday evening and compete on a Saturday and some Sundays.

The club is supportive of the development of the indoor and outdoor courts at Mayer Park. The club indicated that they are not concerned about the loss of a ground as they currently make use of only one oval and it is assumed that a single oval would remain if the indoor and outdoor courts were developed.

The Club sees the proposed development of the facility as opportunity to upgrade the ground, lighting and pavilion at Mayer Park. During periods of bad weather the Club could make use facility for training. The Club currently hire indoor stadium for preseason training.

2.3.3 Croxton Special School

Croxton School is a special education setting, with a commitment to providing a broad-based curriculum catering for the educational needs of students between 5 and 18 years who have specific learning needs. The school currently has 169 students with a range of intellectual disabilities.

The school is located on Beaconsfield Parade, Northcote 0.6km from Mayer Park.

The schools current facilities include an undersized gym. The school would like to access a full sized multi-purpose facility to enable a numbers of schools to interact and opportunities for other activities such as arts shows and concerts.

The school is looking for spaces for combined activities with other special schools; MMI is currently used for these activities.

Mayer Park would be a convenient location, however the school has its own bus and could transport students to an alternate site.

2.4 Internal Focus Group

A meeting of internal Council Officers was held to discuss the proposed development. Representatives from the following Council areas attended the session

- Communication and Marketing
- Facilities Management
- Leisure and Public Realm
- Culture, Leisure and Works
- Assets and Business Services
- City Development
- Economic Development and Civic Compliance
- Business Development
- Strategic Planner
- Project Management
- Transport Management
- Major Projects and Infrastructure

The key issues identified included:

- Suggest involving community in what the criteria for site selection would be. May be an opportunity to reconnect with the community.
- Is it possible to split the courts up over multiple sites? Less operationally viable. Other issue is it wouldn't be classified as a regional facility and would lose access to funding.
- Some debate over the definition of open space. The current Open Space Policy states that open space can be considered for like-use
- Brownfield sites will require rezoning which would be a time constraint, and the soil will have to be remediated. Also are really poor in terms of the transport accessibility.
- Schools don't require planning permits, can have joint use agreements.
- Include more brownfield sites in the site selection lists.
- Community will want to see Council looking for co-location options.
- Retail model – could weigh the retail/commercial opportunity of the site in consideration process. There are no negative comments on the need or the cost of the facility: biggest issue is where to put it.

2.5 Community Information and Consultation Sessions

Two community information and consultation sessions were held at the Northcote Town Hall on Wednesday 3 June and Saturday 13 June 2015. Approximately 110 people attended across the two sessions. The participants at the meetings were provided with a short introductory presentation and were then asked to respond to the following four questions:

- What are the benefits of providing the proposed multi sports stadium to the Darebin community?
- What sports/components should be included in the facility?
- Thinking about the municipality south of Bell Street, where would be a good location for the facility to be developed?
- Are there any concerns with the proposed development?

A large number of participants at the meetings attended the meeting to express their strong opposition at the selection of Mayer Park as a potential site for the proposed development. **Appendix A** provides a transcript of the written feedback provided at both of the meetings. The key themes from the meetings were:

- Very strong concern about loss and alienation of open space and the impact the loss of open space at Mayer Park would have on local residents and the local amenity.
- Concern over loss of open space on current park users including sporting clubs, walkers, dog walkers etc.
- Impact on traffic management and parking around the Mayer Park precinct.
- Acknowledgment and support for the need for an indoor/outdoor multi use facility
- Consideration should be given to the use of industrial land site options for the development of the facility.
- Concerns were raised about the methodology used to communicate to residents.
- A strong need for the provision of a facility in the south to support current and future netball, basketball and other sports participation at a local level.

2.6 Community Survey

A community survey was established to capture responses on sports participation and feedback on where the proposed multi-sports stadium should be located. Residents were given the opportunity to make comment on the proposed development. The survey was available via the following engagement methods:

- Online through Councils website
- Intercept surveys were conducted at the two community forums held on the 3rd and 13th of June 2015.

Respondents were also invited to provide further written comments; a copy of the written comments has been developed as a **Volume 2 – Written Comments** report.

The following provides a summary of the survey results.

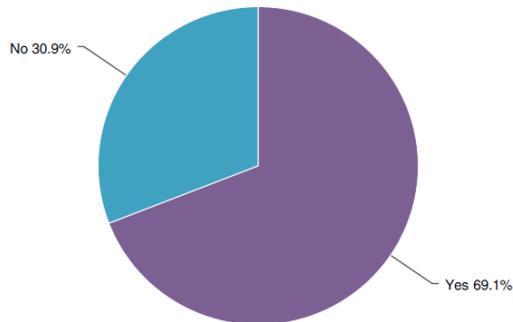
2.6.1 Response Rate

A total of one thousand and eighty nine (1,089) responses were received to the survey, which is considered a very high response rate.

There was an issue with an unknown entity using an automated spamming bot to skew the survey. This occurred shortly after the first community forum and saw 600 bogus responses flooding the system every day for a week. As these were illegitimate responses, they were quarantined and removed from the results.

2.6.2 Involvement in Team Sports

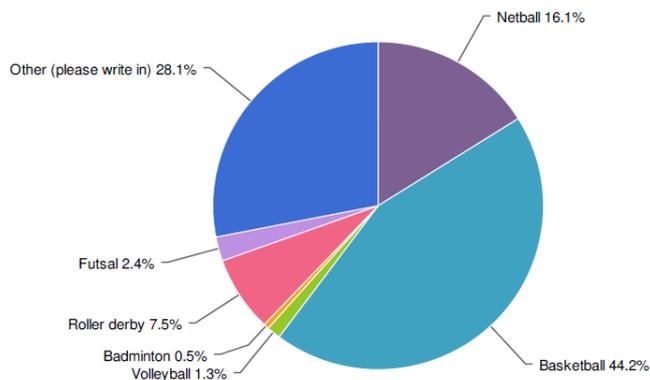
Respondents were asked if they were involved in a team sport. Just fewer than 7 out of 10 respondents 69.1% indicated that they are involved in a team sports.



Graph 6: Involvement in Team Sports

Of the respondents who indicated involvement in a team sport the main sports were:

- Basketball 44.2%
- Netball 16.1%
- Roller Derby 7.5%
- Futsal 2.4%
- Volleyball 1.3%
- Badminton 0.5%
- Other 28.1%

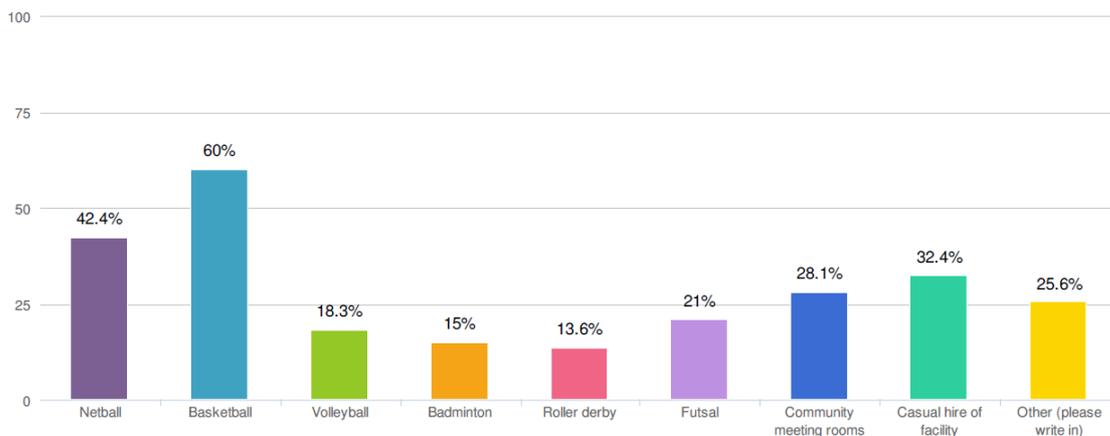


Graph 7: Involvement in Team Sports

2.6.3 Most Used Indoor Sports Facilities

Respondents were asked what facilities they would most likely use at an indoor sports stadium. The top four responses were:

- Basketball courts 60%
- Netball courts 42.4%
- Casual hire of the facility 32.4%
- Community meeting rooms 28.1%
- Futsal (indoor soccer) 21.0%

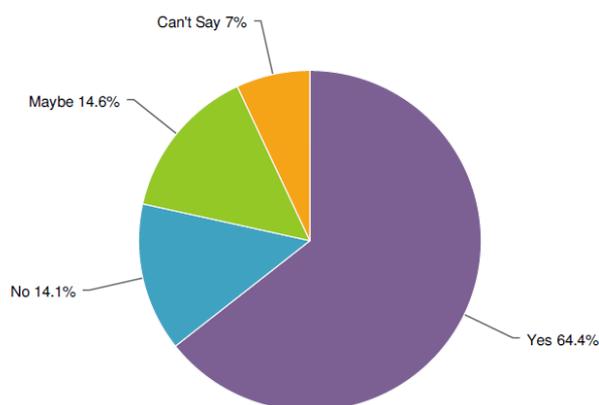


Graph 8: Facilities Most Likely to be Used

2.6.4 Would the Proposed Stadium Increase Sports Participation

Respondents were asked if they thought the proposed stadium would increase sports participation rates in Darebin.

The majority of respondents 79% indicated that the development of a new indoor stadium would or might increase sports participation rates in Darebin. 14.1% of respondents did not believe the stadium would have an impact on participation rates and 7% did not know.

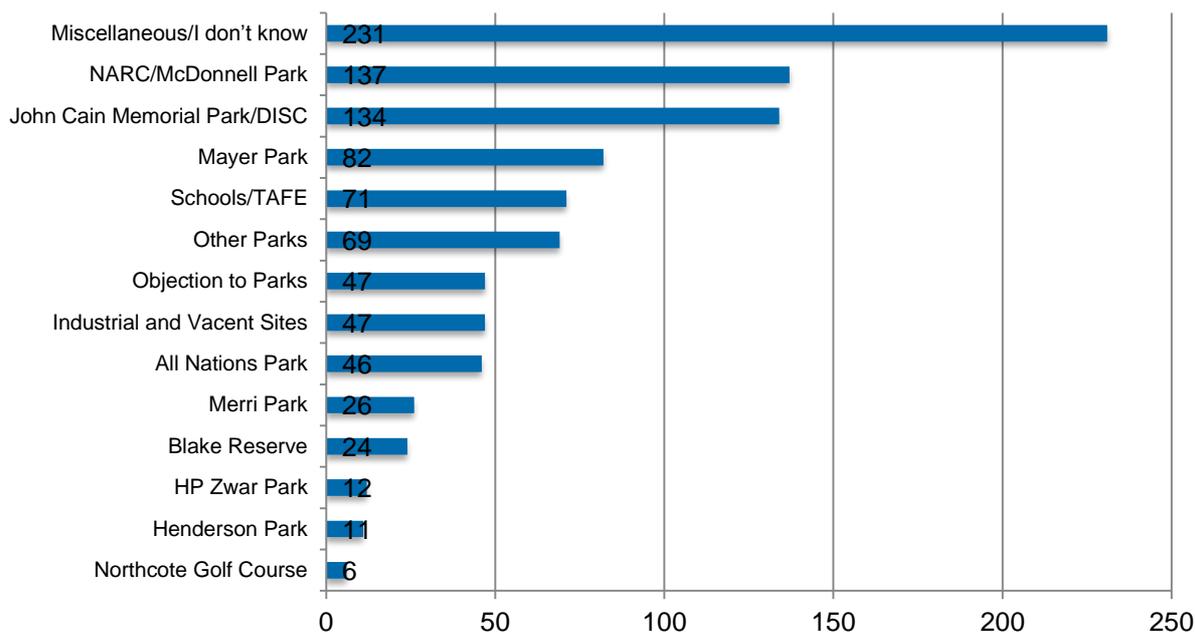


Graph 9: Increase in sport participation rates if new stadium provided

2.6.5 Potential Location for Indoor Stadium

Respondents were asked where they thought the proposed stadium should be located. Of the 1,089 responses to the survey 943 people (86.6%) responded to this questions. The top five responses were:

- Don't know 231 responses (24.5%)
- Northcote Aquatic Centre/ McDonnell Park 137 responses (14.5%)
- John Cain Memorial Park 134 responses (14.2%)
- Mayer Park 82 responses (8.7%)
- Schools and TAFE's 71 responses (7.5%)
- Other Parks 69 responses (7.3%)



Graph 10: Potential Locations for Indoor Sports Stadium

These results indicate a strong preference for either the John Cain Memorial Park that is the current home to a range of other sporting groups and organisations or the site of the current Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

2.6.6 Other Issues

Respondents were invited to provide any further issues or comments. A total of 756 responses were made with the following themes being:

- There is a need for a facility in the area: 266 responses
- Opposition to the development at Mayer Park: 144 responses
- Alternative site suggestions: 95 responses
- Support for the development at Mayer Park: 81 responses
- Opposition to the use of open space for the project: 77 responses
- Opposition to the development of a facility at another site: 36 responses

2.7 Written Submissions

Residents were invited to provide feedback and comment to the proposed development via an email to Council. A total of 67 written submissions were received. The key themes of the written submissions were:

- Opposition to the development of Mayer Park 30 responses
- Suggestions about alternative sites 27 responses
- Lack of support for use of open space for the proposed development 26 responses
- People supporting the development of a facility 8 responses
- Opposed to the development at McDonnell Park 7 responses
- Submissions supporting the development of the Mayer Park facility 7 responses

A copy of the written submissions is provided in **Volume Two – Written Comments**

2.8 Petition

Council received a written petition on 26 June 2015. The petition was signed by 68 people indicating that residents, community groups and sports clubs who utilise the Mayer Park are deeply concerned about the impact such a development will have on the community. Concerned identified include:

- Reduction of green space and amenity
- Loss of off-lead dog walking areas
- Loss of informal exercise and play area
- Increased traffic congestion
- Lack of proposer community consultation by Council
- Dislocation of long term tenant sports clubs

3 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Council provided residents and community groups with an opportunity to provide comments and feedback about the proposed development of a multi court indoor / outdoor facility to cater for the current and future needs of high ball sports in the south of the municipality. The consultation process was based on the adopted Darebin Community Engagement Framework. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive in terms of both the need for a quality indoor/outdoor facility and the proposed scale of the facility. Extensive consultation was undertaken that provided a large reach and high community response rate. Based on the range of different consultation and engagement process undertaken over the eight-week period the following provides a summary of the key issues and areas of concern:

3.1.1 Need for Additional Indoor/Outdoor Sports Facilities

There is strong support and a recognised need for the development of additional indoor and outdoor sports courts to address the demand for key highball sports such as netball and basketball.

Residents acknowledged that the provision of additional facilities would help to increase participation levels in sport and recreation activities and encourage residents to participate in a more active and healthy life.

There was significant feedback from basketball and netball participants about the lack of courts in Darebin and the need to travel outside of the municipal boundaries to participate in their sport.

3.1.2 Mayer Park

There is strong opposition to the option of Mayer Park being a potential location for the development of the facility. The community surrounding Mayer Park identified the following concerns and impacts:

- Reduction of green space and amenity
- Loss of off-lead dog walking areas
- Loss of informal exercise and play area
- Increased traffic congestion
- Lack of proposer community consultation by Council
- Dislocation of long term tenant sports clubs

3.1.3 Possible Locations

In excess of 100 different sites were identified by residents as a potential location for the proposed development.

The two sites that appear to have the most support and the least resistance were Darebin Internationals Sports Centre and the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

The Darebin International Sports Centre is known as a major hub or precinct for sporting activities. Key sporting groups such as FFV, cycling and lawns bowls already have a strong presence in the precinct. The proposed development received in principle support from the FFV who indicated they are strong supporters of multi sports stadiums in general. They further indicated an awareness and need to partner with other sporting groups in the development of facilities for community use.

The Northcote Aquatic Centre Site at McDonnell Park is also a precinct hosting a range of sporting and recreation facilities. The Aquatic Centre is in need of major refurbishment to service the current and future aquatic and leisure needs of residents. The opportunity to develop indoor and outdoor sports courts as part of the future redevelopment would provide a number of community and social benefits and economies of scale in terms of the operations and management of the facilities.

A number of responses indicated that Council should not consider any open space for the development of the proposed facility and should investigate brown field (industrial) sites. Council officers investigated some potential industrial sites. The investigations indicate that the cost to purchase and remediate the site would be cost prohibitive.

Appendix One: Community Information Session 3 June 2015 Feedback

Benefits	Concerns
Group One	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good location • Industrial area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Report focused on existing open green spaces. – If offsets required anyway, why not start where the offsets will go? • Not losing existing well used green space • John Cain Park – existing infrastructure carparks, etc. • Well serviced by public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing green space • Traffic • Car Parking – Heat Island • Public transport accessibility • Loss of community asset (Mayer Park) • Loss of revenue to Government Schools – hiring out of existing facilities • Carbon offsets? – Why build out green space that is well used and valued already, only to have to offset with new green space.....later (yeah sure). • Fencing public space (de-facto privatisation by stealth?) • Report: Qualitative judgements posing as quantitative science.

Benefits
Group Two
<p>Darebin Parklands (Nursery site? – possible venue site)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail access / bus access • Off street parking • Good re-use of land • A variety of sports to occupy the venue – fair allocation. • Keeps the local people active in a variety of ways. <p>Northcote YMCA and Northcote High School – equally preferred</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volleyball – lack of facilities • Multi-community usage • Arts involvement (theatre/drama venue)

- Keeps local people in the local area
- Could be a 'hub' for the people of Darebin
- Creates local interaction
- Banyule – no local facility (despite local players)
- Parking can be an issue
- Promoting sporting activities for girls
- Venue to be safe/secure at night time – not isolated.

Concerns at Mayer Park

Group Three

- Loss of open green space
- Park is a special local community space
- Loss of off-lead dog park (only off-lead park in walking distance of Leinster Grove)
- Significant traffic increase – traffic is already congested around Leinster Grove and surrounding streets.
- Lack of recognition of incidental exercise at Mayer Park
- No consultation with residents to date
- Misleading consultation process – no indication from Council that Mayer Park was/is number one choice. This only became knowledge through a local flyer.
- Right in the middle of residential Zone 1
- Other alternatives have less impact on residential Zone 1
 - John Cain (zero impact Zone 1)
 - Northcote High School (zero impact on one sider)
- Other options – utilise part of Northcote Golf Course
- Has road duplication been costed into the \$13M budget?
- Middle of Darebin (Mayer Park is on Moreland border)
- Safety concerns: loitering youth, concerns about fighting and police presence.

Incidental Users at Mayer Park

Group Four

- Dog walkers
- Personal Trainers
- Soccer – not formally organised
- Cricket - not formally organised
- Football training
- Hula-hoopers, slack liners
- Picnics
- Meditation
- Tai Chi

- Hot Air Balloons
- Joggers
- Walkers
- Music
- Families
- Remote control helicopters flyers
- Kites
- Ballroom dancers

Appendix Two: Community Information Session 13 June 2015 Feedback

Residents Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I came with no knowledge, now informed spirited comments, fantastic turnout. Democracy in action, why I love Darebin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That any new Indoor Sports Stadium within Darebin , under NO CIRCUMSTANCES be built on existing Greenfield / Park / Open Space)/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New netball courts – great idea. Losing the last bit of public open space in Croxton/Merri locality – really stupid. Why have one huge monumental facility which will be mainly car park? Obviously a great monument to successive councils who have done nothing but why not 3 smaller facilities scattered around the suburb?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should not be an “either/or” issue. We need both open space and sporting facilities. Council <u>must</u> fund other indoor venues as they are or say they are committed to open space!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overwhelming view in this meeting: “Leave Parks Alone”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of Community Hall and its many groups or users. Current traffic on Leinster Grove and Normanby Avenue is very bad already. There are many users that enjoy the open space. Where is Council’s proposal to provide open space if the park is taken away?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am opposed to Mayer Park being considered in this proposal as it is free of commercial interests. The other ‘open space’ site have already been compromised and that should be part of the considerations. Also sharing management and contracts with existing sports precincts would be more efficient in the long run.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic and parking will be a major concern for all residents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What price for “free” public open space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of vacant factory space that doesn’t need remediation should also be considered.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for more sporting facilities. Mayer Park is currently well used and the community continues to need open space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of open space for current users – (sports clubs – soccer/cricket, fitness groups, open leash pet areas) and kids who access the already limited space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birdlife in Mayer Park is increasing and diversifying and facility like this will seriously impact this. Open space provides ‘mental’ space and opportunity to hear the birds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong concern that ‘open’ space is seen as the default option for considering development. Mayer Park is heavily utilised for organised and free physical activity. Essential for health and wellbeing for all of the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosing an open space for specific sports closes that space for all who are not involved in the sports that are engaged in those specific sports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consideration of recreational users of Mayer Park was included in feasibility study – a huge oversight.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking/Traffic is already a major issue due to Normanby Ave being a major East-West Link. This will in all likelihood get worse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park is utilised by many “organised” and adhoc users – Cricket, Families, Soccer Fitness Groups (Step Into Life), School Sports, Fitness Individuals, Picnics/Small Events, Children, Ballooning Companies. Why stifle these practices for a couple of sports?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is not just “open space”, it is used by the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need a safe place to walk our dogs, kick balls, fly kites and celebrate with the community. Mayer Park provides this, do not take this away!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darebin Council’s own Open Space Strategy 2007-2017. Council supports a position of no net loss of open space, preferring not to construct buildings on open space where possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use green open space for needed sports facilities – pay for industrial land and use the money you collect for open space from all the multiple housing developments to pay for the industrial land.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normanby Ave and surrounding streets already under immense stress due to traffic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers use access to open space as reason not to provide open space in their housing. Using public open space for a stadium makes a joke of their argument.

Residents Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every area needs easy access to open space for informal activities. • Taking away a park disenfranchises community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With massive development of industrial sites for flats etc. (ie Gadd St and St Georges Rd no open space has been demanded in these areas and the pressure is increasing dramatically on existing parkland. No building on any open space (parkland) is to be tolerated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'don't use Mayer Park' group are not against the stadium – quite the opposite.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about sharing the old paper mill stadium to be with Yarra.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Mayer Park. Concrete buildings add to Global Warming. • Need more trees and green space. All ages use green space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use school space for basketball/netball increase school numbers. Empty or closed schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use exiting parklands that are currently well-used by their local communities. I suggest that the Council does some research into how these spaces are used. You only have to watch. • Also look out for: masked wood swallows, galahs, willywag tails, grass parrots, kookaburras, native wood pigeons, magpies, lorikeets, ibis and currawangs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand for facilities is driven by increased population which is in turn driven by increased residences - particularly small apartments developments which provide no open space for residents. Assuming this is increasing rates revenue. Surely money is available to reclaim industrial land to provide needed facilities for these potential ghettos. • Perhaps developers benefitting from this massive (and often ugly) increase in apartment dwellings might contribute to a formal for this. • Open space is increasingly valuable in this scenario. Mayer Park is used by so many people all day for all kinds of activity. It is a valuable community hub for unorganised, informal, not commercial activity. It is vital and priceless.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of Mayer Park and local residents were not consulted in feasibility study – this is a much used and much loved park.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As housing density increases in Darebin, open parkland becomes even more important.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Mayer Park alone. • Provides multitudes of things for families to do. • I've been using the park for all of my 59 years, my 3 kids grow up constantly using the park for exercise, ball sports, dog walking, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No development on Mayer Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save Mayer Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands off Mayer Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need the amenities of court but must also keep Open Space re purpose – 'BROWN SITE'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normanby Ave and surrounding streets are already failing to cope with traffic demand. • The statement in the options report that Normanby is capable of carrying more traffic is INCORRECT and shows how inadequate this research has been.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy the old bus depot on Beavers Rd – plenty of space and for sale currently. • Possible public private collaboration ie Developer contributes to infrastructure and does adjoin residential development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over time, the green spaces will become more and more practical to quality of life. We must protect these precious resources from development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty schools – Darebin Girls High School? Use these
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone considering Mayer Park as a site should try driving up Normanby Ave on a Saturday morning! Good Luck!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Blowout
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep green spaces for people. • Attach the sporting facilities to a school. • Don't build it at all. • The costs will increase and the Council will be bankrupt which we rate payers will have to bear. • Keep green spaces to keep Darebin from Global Warming.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build it next to schools to maximise usage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No parks to be used – Mayer Park is a good plain site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents surrounding Mayer Park shouldn't pay for 20 years of Council's inaction on developing sports facilities.

Residents Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the save of a small demographic (Young Girls/Organised Sports) the majority (Soccer, AFL, Cricket, Boot Camps, Dog Walkers Young and Old) will be disadvantaged. Use an industrial site, furthermore Darebin Council is already over urbanised – if they use open land it's gone for good! Normanby Ave is the 2nd most used East-West road to Bell Street. By putting a major sporting complex on it will only increase the traffic. The Council's own preference is to keep the open spaces – or so they profess.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green open spaces provide a place of solace and revival for people. Particularly those who may be experiencing challenging domestic situations. These places offer some respite for those who experience adversity from others or even their own problems. These green spaces are an underrated psychological benefit for people of all ages in high density areas such as Thornbury and surrounds is becoming.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indoor stadium will provide good focal point for the community sport, particularly, small group sports provide an important part of the social fabric for the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a member of the community an indoor stadium will NOT provide a good focal point for the community, it will generate more isolation and disconnect with the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free public sport spaces versus pay per use – please consider conversion/reallocation of an existing commercial site (ie large warehouse) as an alternative to both green space and remediation of industrially degraded land. Thank you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri and Darebin creeks provide very important wildlife corridors. It was discussed that linking areas should be developed and Mayer Park contributes significantly to this need. It is a very important area for birds Mayer Park must stay as is because: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Old people and old animals need a place within walking reach 2) Social space for all 3) Multicultural teams use oval 4) Place of solace and nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More open space for the increasing female soccer participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go Big! Federal funding Yarra Bend National Park – lots of space for all kinds of users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desperate need for both indoor and outdoor courts in local (ie South of Bell St) Darebin area but wish the discussion would be about courts and sports <u>only</u> not about Netball courts for “Girls” and Basketball courts for “Boys”. I have 2 girls playing basketball and loving it – would love to do it more locally and with more teams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor facilities needed for adults, only adult basketball comps and stadium in Bulleen or Boroondara. That's a lot of driving. Old people need to be active too!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor facilities desperately needed but why not consider buying 2 story and with local schools so facility is use is as intense as possible. Assumptions in this process have started with open space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will the sporting needs of girls be prioritised in this process? How can this be a guaranteed outcome?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McDonnell Park/YMCA Northcote is best site. YMCA and pool could benefit needs re-furb and can manage courts. Lots of young people and adults play netball and basketball all outside of Darebin....CO2 emissions! Think Local!
<p>Strong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Space – loss of amenity Current users ie dog walkers Cost of industrial area Acknowledge need for facility Concern re: methodology, not enough research Potential for master plan for Mayer Park – can golf course be included? Email steps from here Open space strategy – not net loss of open space Is the feedback going to be made public?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The journey between Leinster and St George Rd along Normanby Ave takes 15 mins in peak hour and Saturday morning's traffic is already a massive problem.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave Mayer Park alone because:

Residents Comments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catholic Maronite Church already impinges on traffic - Sports organisations already use it - Hot Air Ballooning - Dog Walkers - Guide Dog Training - General Public – picnics, kite flying, ball kicking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space lost is never regained • Alternative – What is happening to the Alphington Paper Mill site? Princes Hill High view on the location of facilities? Preston Girls High School is now empty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precious Mayer Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dog Walking - Community gathering - Soccer Players (girls team) - Mothers/Fathers with prams/kids • PLEASE leave it alone!!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about impact on traffic and parking for local residents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look ahead 50 years!! How many open park areas are going to be remaining in poor old Darebin?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase scope of parameters to 'brownfields' site – opportunity cost of offer Council options need to be redirected to this 'priority' rather than not being an option to consider. • Many advantages of 'brownfields' development. • Take open space green 'off the table' – analysis of houses, green space rations south of Bell Street.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate site – Beavers Road industrial site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No green space to be used – these facilities are needed but so too is open green space. • Develop disused industrial land.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building this in Mayer Park is introducing much traffic/more congestion in an area which has just recently had a huge increase in development (ie Godd Street). • The surrounding streets will be a mess in terms of traffic, we already have significant ultication between drivers trying to get through local streets. • We cannot afford to lose any more green space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update already existing facilities – YMCA Northcote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues – late notification of plan, poor consultation of local people (no letter drop and reliance on website – my neighbours don't have web access and don't have English skills. They had no idea of Mayer Park option or whole thing of green space use. • What about Preston Girls site?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mandatory to retain open green space when housing density is increasing as it is in this municipality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave open space alone. We need it. • Put a stadium on an industrial site!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stadium will not have a net positive impact on physical activity when you consider the loss of opportunity created by displacing the many informal (MAYER) park users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drainage system under Mayer Park precludes building over it. • The buildings would need to be on stilts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety – already witnessed dogs x 10 killed/hit along Normanby Ave. Also accidents involving cars and near misses with children. • If this were to go ahead traffic would increase and safety with children is paramount.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you we get a “costing” on develop on industrial land (all locations are “green land”).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog walking/community gatherings • Parents/families gatherings/walk • Soccer teams (girls teams) • Cricket teams – Indoor team • Nets used all Summer • Huge meeting place for local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must put a value on the many informal activities (ie. unmeasured for the report that to on in our parks).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are you looking at Mayer Park which has parking problems already? • Mayer has traffic problems as it is and 900 more people x 300+ cars will be a nightmare. • Money has been spent extending the old scout hall and sports changing room to bulldoze it.

Residents Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our son loves playing soccer in the park. • Traffic is already congested on Leinsten Grove and Normanby Ave. • There are no other green areas safe for women to walk around nearby. • Put your basketball courts somewhere else!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who aren't into or can't physically engage in high intensity training need open spaces for light to moderate exercise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf course part of consideration. How long is lease for golf course?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love Mayer Park and its green open space, it is our local dog off lead site and a real community space. Building over it and losing it permanently must not happen. • It is the open space that the Gadd St development (about 200 dwellings) used as response to concerns re lack of open space in development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith St rat run already exists if it is placed in Mayer Park the traffic will be much worse for residents. • How will the Council address this – not everyone will use public transport to get to the venue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement of existing users (sports clubs and recreational users).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantage to current residents/purchased property for location/open spaces. • Children restricted in play spaces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens to the Community Hall? • Normanby Ave, Leinster Grv and Woolton Avenue residents already struggle to find parking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would increase traffic for local streets • Widen Leinster Grove – decrease serious traffic safety • Important catchment to Merri Creek
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected 25% population increase in Darebin, along with increase in unit development (especially St Georges Rd which embarked for 3-7 storey unit development). • Necessitates retainment of 'community backyards'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already heavy traffic congestion near and around Mayer Park • Stadium here would increase this and increase noise pollution • Decrease open space negatively affects park users (fitness, soccer, kids, pets)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also increase traffic along an already busy road - Normanby Ave. It's bumper to bumper now.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more creativeness who need open space too. • Consider wildlife corridors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave all open park spaces alone!!! • So short-sighted – incompetent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrible option Mayer Park – no room and lack of planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Mayer Park free for walkers, joggers, dog walkers, elderly residents. • This park is important in the struggle to keep Melbourne from growing <u>hotter</u> and increasing population.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building indoor and outdoor courts will boost participation • The experience I have had at Collingwood Basketball Association is that participation orientated community clubs form quickly and find it easy to organise kids and adults into teams and most importantly, this leads to growth in participation and inclusion of people who would not otherwise get the chance to play sport, meet people, help each other, give of themselves to others and build community! • It is about building a better community <u>not</u> looking after interest groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community space (open for structured indoor) requires considered • Balance on 'value and outcome' • 1 soccer pitch = 200 participants in a day • 4 indoor courts = 1,000 participants in a day • Determining 'suitable' land for open and indoor spaces requires community commitment ie \$\$ to pay for all for the good of <u>all</u>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very much in favour of netball courts for kids but having lived in Croxton (Emmaline St) for 30 years I am appalled by the loss of space and overcrowding that has occurred and is increasing. • Why do we have to have one monumental indoor stadium when there could be 3 smaller units?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I strongly support the provision of a multi-use stadium but not at the cost of loss of open space at Mayer Park. I think John Cain is a reasonable alternative in the case where industrial land cannot be acquired. • I hope Darebin would advocate for residents and request more funding from State Govt to fund a health and leisure facility that doesn't take away from an existing council owned resource.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would love to see courts/stadium built on existing "brown site" or redevelopment of NARC.

Residents Comments

- Facility is needed but current “open space” must be protected.
- Our area is a black hole for high ball sports and kids.