

# Nelson Bay Hockey Club Inc



## Special Meeting Minutes – Tuesday 22nd November 2022 Synthetic Turf Field Discussion #1

### 6:30 pm meeting opened

**Present:** Vince Northwood, Cathy Churchill, Kate Collins, Lindsay Brown, Jane Casement, Nathan Whitten, Ros Sherlock (Hunter Hockey / Maitland Hockey)

**Apologies:** Juliet O'Rourke,

- **Meeting Aim:**
  - **To start a conversation about the possibility of establishing a Synthetic Turf Field in the Tomaree area**
- **Background:**
  - Synthetic playing surfaces are becoming more common and widespread, used by all sports
    - Newcastle Hockey 3 ½ fields, Maitland 1 good water-based field, Cessnock 1 field
    - Many others in common use e.g. Speers Point Soccer 4 fields, etc
  - Major problems with grass playing fields in general, including SSC – drainage, waterlogged, unplayable, maintenance issues. Many cancellations across all sports, including hockey.
  - New synthetic turf technologies becoming available – allow intensive use across wide range of sports. Multi-Sport Shared turf facilities are becoming the norm.
  - Grant opportunities – esp for Multi-Sport Shared synthetic fields
  - Future Turf Account + contribution system started by Vince (and others) in 1992 – now our NBHC Investment Account
- **Acknowledgements:**
  - Tomaree Sports Council planning documents have included a “Synthetic Hockey Field” for approx. 30 years, thanks to early advocacy by Vince Northwood / Port Stephens Hockey Association
  - A fund has been established to support future moves towards a synthetic field, thanks to the foresight and efforts of Vince Northwood during the years of PSHA
  - Thankyou to Ros Sherlock (Hunter Hockey / Maitland Hockey) for attending and sharing her experience with establishing turf at Maitland, and her vision for Hunter Hockey.
- **Documents tabled:**
  - Adopted Tomaree Sports Complex Masterplan
- **General Business: -**
  - **A “Multi-sport synthetic field”** –
    - Will be used by a wide range of sports if suitably designed and coordinated
    - Match-play for many sports, training venue for others
    - Hockey, tennis, netball, soccer, futsal, touch football, Austag, athletics, AFL, baseball, cricket, pickleball, rugby league, rugby union
    - Will require coordinated management, bookings, maintenance, etc
  - **An All-Weather facility**
    - Recent wet seasons have highlighted the challenges in maintaining grass fields to a standard suitable for regular or intensive use
    - Many sports have suffered ongoing game cancellations, loss of membership, etc
    - A synthetic field can be used in all weather, and is designed for intensive use – 7 days a week, night games included
  - **What the facility will contribute to the greater Tomaree community** –
    - Tourist area – extensive tourist accommodation available immediately adjacent - will attract advanced sporting event possibilities

- Senior population – more options for physical activity – a much better surface for older bodies to exercise on
  - Remote regional area – increased local sporting opportunities will reduce the demand for travel to/from Newcastle – expense / inconvenience / carbon footprint, etc
  - Local athletes will have a better grounding in sporting skills which will prepare them well for progression to larger competitions
- **Existing turf facilities** –
- A large number of existing facilities and current projects across NSW have been identified. Synthetic fields appear to be the “way of the future” for Sport
  - We need to gather examples to show to potential users and involved people / organisations - research and gather examples from other similar centres (Richard HNSW)
  - We need to speak with people involved in establishing past and current projects – find good advice, pitfalls to avoid. e.g.
    - Maitland 2010 Govt grant \$250k + \$500k, loan \$400k, cost \$1m
    - Cessnock 1985?
    - Current synthetic proposals / projects – Mudgee, Molong?, others
- **Possible sites** – a number of possible sites have already been identified, *(there may be others?)* with many points **for/against** – in summary:
- **Salamander Sporting Complex** –
    - Supporting infrastructure already established – road access, carpark, clubhouse building with storage, canteen, changerooms, field lighting
    - Second grass field available
    - Subsidence, unsuitable base – could this be overcome with suitable engineering? – to investigate – *consult with turf installers.*
    - Will be viewed as a “Hockey” project – will not have full support of other sports
    - Would take a field out of use during construction phase.
  - **Tomaree tennis courts**, (between Tomaree School and Aquatic Centre) –
    - This is the site shown for Hockey on the TSC Masterplan – already “approved”
    - Great location near schools, good access for large number of students,
    - Will relieve schools’ intensive use of Tomaree field 5 in particular
    - Close to Netball, Soccer, Touch – may suit their future expansion
    - Nearby to newly completed Bruce Scott Pavilion, overflow parking etc.
    - Large number of old-growth trees to remove, major earthworks required to level
    - No infrastructure in place – road access, carparks, services, buildings etc
    - A congested area – shares access used by school, pool, Toboggan Park, netball
    - Only room for one field, no future expansion possible
  - **Council Depot / Helipad** (adjacent to Pistol Club – Eastern extremity of Tomaree fields)
    - Space already dedicated on Masterplan for future expansion
    - Complements and improves the Plan and coherence of the overall facility, close to many other sports’ current location
    - Space for 2 fields (when Council Depot moves)
    - Land is currently vacant – current usage unknown/minimal – *to investigate*
    - Highly visible location next to main road, cycleway
    - No impact on residential areas
    - No impact on existing fields during construction
    - Delay in moving Council depot,
    - Will need infrastructure – access road, parking, services, buildings, lighting etc
  - **Are there any other possible / suitable sites?**
- **Financial aspects**
- A major expenditure – overall cost largely influenced by the site chosen, type of surface recommended, other related infrastructure needed, etc. We need to identify the best site so that firmer figures can be calculated.

- NSW Office of Sport Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund – recent round of applications closed 22nd Sept – is this an ongoing program? how often are these offered?
  - Be aware that large costs are often the first reason some people will give for rejecting a proposal – need to continue to highlight the benefits
- **Next steps:**
  - **Start conversations** to raise awareness of the concept and reasoning, needs / benefits –
    - other sportspeople,
    - Sports Councillors – TSC support is essential
    - PS Councillors, Relevant Council staff
    - State and Federal MP’s
    - HNSW - Richard Griffiths HNSW GM-Business Development & Government Relations
  - **Consult** with Sports Council, Port Stephens Council to reach agreement on the preferred site that will give maximum benefits to all sports and the Community
  - **Gather examples** of successful multi-sport facilities – convey these to local sporting community
  - **Research** possible turf suppliers - seek preliminary technical advice, new technologies
  - **Keep** Hockey community **informed** – include PS Hornets, Hunter, Newcastle, HNSW, local schools
  - **Future meetings** should expand beyond Hockey Club members – other sports, Community positions, etc

Meeting Closed 8:30pm

Next Meeting: Synthetic Turf Discussion TBA January 2023 - 6:30pm Salamander Sporting Complex Meeting Room
--