

Centennial Parklands



Sports Strategy 2004-2007 summary report

**Future directions for sport and
organised activity**

Recognition of Input to the Sports Strategy

Centennial Parklands Staff

Study guided by Sarah Dinning, Manager Marketing and Community Relations

Research and input by Rachel Jones, Recreational Services Officer

Input by Marlene Krasovitsky, Acting Director; Andrew Ferris, Manager Operations;

Amanda Bock, Manager Strategic Projects; Steve Anderson, Contracts Administrator

Suter and Associates Leisure and Tourism Planners

Suzanne Suter, Principal

Undertook consultations and developed Draft Strategy

Project Advisory Group (sport, school and community representatives), including:

Derick Zilich, Publishers Cup

Doug Atkinson, Sydney Swans

Graeme Dedrick, Scots College

Greg Weiss, Moriah College

Laurie Heil, Sydney Boys High and South Eastern Junior Cricket

Peter Tzannes, Community Consultative Committee

Ron Crawford, Randwick Botany Harriers

Wayne Morgan, Community Consultative Committee

Yvette Pietsch, Community Consultative Committee

Contents

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
BACKGROUND	
About the Strategy	2
Approach	2
DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE	
Ongoing commitment to sport	3
Guiding principles	3
KEY ISSUES	
Broad issues	5
Sporting grounds	5
ES Marks	6
Outdoor courts	6
Equestrian	7
Cycling	7
Golf	8
Other organised sport or recreation use of Centennial Parklands	8
STRATEGIES	
Broad issues	9
Sporting grounds	9
ES Marks	10
Outdoor courts	10
Equestrian	10
Cycling	10
Golf	11
Other organised sport or recreation use of Centennial Parklands	11
IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW	
Approach to implementation	12
Ongoing review	12

Executive summary

Centennial Parklands has always experienced high demand for quality sporting grounds with over 14,000 individual sport and organised recreation events held during 2003-2004. As we witness a substantial increase in the surrounding population, demand for open space and sporting grounds within Centennial Parklands and neighbouring council areas will grow significantly.

To ensure the Trust continues to balance the demands that population growth produces while also maintaining the character of the Parklands, a comprehensive Sports Strategy has been developed that will guide the future provision for and management of sport and other organised recreation activities in Centennial Parklands.

The focus of the Strategy is to identify the areas in the Parklands that are most appropriate for sport and organised activity; determine which facilities should be provided in the future; determine the appropriate level of quality for different types of facilities and areas; guide the appropriate allocation and use of different areas and facilities by different user groups, including the availability of areas for future users; and consider the appropriate contribution from user groups and the partnerships that could be established.

One of the key aims of the Strategy is to develop a regionally integrated approach to the provision of sport facilities. By establishing a regional network with surrounding local councils the Trust aims to minimise unnecessary duplication of regional assets and services.

While the Trust has consistently demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality and safety of sporting facilities through other strategic plans and consultations, the Sports Strategy highlights other priorities and provides the guiding direction for sport and organised activity in Centennial Parklands.

Background

About the Strategy

The Sports Strategy will provide a strategic direction through broad principles and directions and an operational direction through specific actions. An Action Plan has been developed as a separate 'working document' that links to and supports the implementation of the Sports Strategy.

The Sports Strategy relates to organised sporting activity, including club sport and school based sport, and other organised recreation and sport activities such as golf, group cycling, horse riding and fitness and sports training. Such organised activities will generally be regular activities and/or membership, competition or 'fee for service' based.

The Sports Strategy does not relate to a casual game of sport played by a family or group as part of a social gathering as this is not considered to be an 'organised' activity, nor does it relate to an organised event as this is managed by the Events Policy.

The Sports Strategy is consistent with and builds on other strategic plans including the Plan of Management; Moore Park South Master Plan; Queens Park Master Plan; Transport, Access and Parking Plan; a safety audit undertaken for ES Marks and recent planning for amenities and equestrian facilities.

For ease of reading, 'organised sport and organised sport and recreation activities' will be referred to as 'sport and organised activity' in the Sports Strategy.

Approach

The development of the Sports Strategy has involved a consultative approach with sport and organised activity groups and Centennial Parklands staff.

The steps have involved the following:

- Obtaining background information on the current provision, demand and issues, including:
 - Reviewing previous relevant studies and plans
 - Collating existing information on provision and use
 - Consulting with Centennial Parklands staff, sport and activity groups and schools
- Assessing the issues and opportunities in consultation with staff and users.
- Developing the Sports Strategy and Action Plan.

The consultation approach has included:

- Consideration of the consultation findings in other relevant studies such as the Moore Park South Master Plan and the Transport, Access and Parking Plan.
- Planning sessions with the Management Team of Centennial Parklands.
- Meetings with operational and planning staff at Centennial Parklands.
- Consultation with the Centennial Parklands Community Consultative Committee.
- A planning session with sporting groups.
- A planning session with school representatives.
- A session with users of ES Marks regarding operational issues.
- Consultation with a Project Advisory Group, with sport, school and community representatives. This group was established to provide further input and feedback (2 sessions were held).

Directions for the future

Ongoing commitment to sport

The Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy confirms that the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is committed to continuing to provide quality opportunities for sport and organised activity in Centennial Parklands. In particular, the Trust is committed to:

- *Supporting* sport and organised activity through the provision of quality facilities and services.
- Maintaining a safe, appealing and accessible environment for sport and organised activity. This will involve *managing* sport and organised activity to minimise the impacts as well as providing safe, appealing and accessible facilities.

However, the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is also committed to providing for informal recreation and recognises the need for a balanced provision of sport and organised activity opportunities with informal recreation opportunities.

The Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy is therefore focussed on *supporting* sport and organised activity, but also *managing* the activities to minimise the impacts on the resource and other users. This is the basis of the directions included in the Strategy.

Guiding principles

The principles that will guide the future provision and management of sport and organised activity in Centennial Parklands are shown below:

- Centennial Parklands will continue to provide a balance of sport and organised activity opportunities with informal recreation opportunities. An integrated approach to provision and management will be adopted.
- Facilities in Centennial Parklands will be developed and managed to be appealing, safe and accessible (including access to people with a disability where possible), with an emphasis on providing a quality environment for sport and organised activity. This includes managing use to minimise impacts. Some facilities will be higher standard to cater for higher grade competitions, e.g. the Bus Loop Oval, ES marks and the McKay Oval turf cricket pitch. This is consistent with the different levels of participation and requirements in sport.
- The relatively undeveloped character of the Parklands will be maintained when providing for sport. This will include appropriately locating and limiting the development of buildings and structures such as amenities, shelters, storage areas, lighting and activity structures.
- Sporting development will be less dominant in Centennial Park compared to areas that have a greater emphasis on sport such as ES Marks, Moore Park and Queens Park. Centennial Park will maintain a stronger informal recreation focus.
- The principle of multi-use will be encouraged and 'exclusivity of use' will be avoided in Centennial Parklands. Generally grounds and amenities will cater for a number of activities or a number of groups.
- Sporting grounds will generally be accessible to the wider community for informal recreation use. Access will only be restricted if there are safety issues or the quality of the facility justifies protection from day to day use.
- The allocation of grounds will be equitable and based on justified demand. This will involve reviewing allocations each year, supporting existing and new users in accordance with demand and the availability of grounds and limiting lease and license arrangements.

- User fees will be based on obtaining a fair and equitable contribution from sport and organised activity groups towards day to day operations and improvements.
- There may be partnerships with user groups and other organisations to achieve facilities, improvements and activities. However, a partnership will not result in a group controlling or gaining exclusivity of use of an area or facility. The Trust may continue to subsidise activities in recognition of the benefits of participation.
- Strategies in Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy must be financially viable and justified. This may involve detailed feasibility assessment and consultations with users prior to implementation for some strategies.

Key issues

A number of key issues have been identified from the consultations and research. These issues are summarised below:

Broad issues

- There is a need to balance the provision for sport and organised activity with recreation, and maintain flexibility in design and use.
- Centennial Parklands has limited capacity to cater for sport and recreation needs. This highlights the importance of regional planning.
- Sporting groups are concerned about the future of sport due to the focus on informal recreation and the past loss of grounds. Overall demand is increasing.
- The cost of providing facilities and maintaining areas for sport and organised activity is high.
- Some sporting facilities in Centennial Parklands are ageing and in need of upgrade. A strategy is required to ensure the appropriate level of quality and address issues of risk, safety and health.
- There is a need to review the current fee structure and consider a more equitable fee structure, eg reflection of field quality, possible concessions.
- Centennial Parklands' environment needs to be safe and secure.
- There is potential for a more regular interaction with and involvement of user groups.

Sporting grounds

- There is demand for additional sporting grounds from current users due to the previous loss of grounds and increasing levels of participation.
- There is a need for sporting groups to be more flexible in their competitions to reduce the concentrated use of grounds.
- Centennial Parklands has limited capacity and flexibility to support additional future demands.
- There is over use of a number of grounds, particularly in Queens Park. Consideration needs to be given to the impacts of weather conditions and seasonal variations.
- Ground allocations are often based on past use and there is limited ability to support new groups and emerging sports.
- The time between seasons for field recovery is limited.
- Sporting groups are keen to increase their security of tenure over grounds and facilities.
- The allocation of grounds to primary schools during school hours at no cost is considered to be inequitable by some sporting groups.
- The allocation of the eastern end of Queens Park to Waverley College has raised various issues, eg control over access.
- There is over booking of grounds by some schools.
- The use of McKay Field No. 1 is limited (mainly used by Sydney Boys High). There is a perception that the ground is not available for other groups.
- The demand for field lighting by sporting groups is high (particularly for training).

- A number of amenities are poor quality. There is a need for appealing, safe and easily accessible amenities linked to sporting areas.
- Structures are required to support sport such as shade, shelter, cricket nets, seating.
- There is a lack of opportunities for storage. However, provision would result in increased development in the Parklands, which is inconsistent with the broader strategic direction.
- The need for administration space and the potential to provide a combined regional space as part of the redevelopment of ES Marks has been raised. However, such provision would require considerable space and development funds, with minimal return on investment.
- The lack of parking is an issue across the Parklands as highlighted in the Transport, Access and Parking Plan.
- There is demand for use of the Bus Loop Oval. Due to the ground's quality, consideration needs to be given to 'what is the appropriate level and mix of use' and 'who should be the key users'.
- Permanent baseball diamonds are sought by Women's Baseball. However, the impact on the flow and aesthetics of the Parklands could be significant if such facilities were established.
- There is a lack of signage, such as the numbering of fields and the naming of some grounds.

ES Marks

- The future development of ES Marks is uncertain due to the need to further investigate Moore Park South Master Plan directions. This limits current improvement to the facility.
- The quality and safety of the athletics track is a health and safety issue (although some improvements have occurred during the study timeframe).
- Whilst the buildings have been found to be structurally sound, they are relatively poor quality, with most in an ageing state and having limited appeal.
- There is no dedicated throwing area for javelin and as a result there are conflicts and risks to users.
- There is a lack of management presence at the facility.
- There is currently no control over access to the centre.
- The arrangement with Athletics NSW regarding equipment storage and hire and the role Athletics NSW plays in controlling activities requires a review.
- There is limited car parking within and around the ES Marks facility.
- There is a need for improved signage, including signage that promotes a code of conduct to guide the use of the facility.
- The maintenance checks of the playing field and track need to be increased, eg pre and post event safety checks.
- The playing field is at risk of over use, particularly in the winter season.
- There is a need to formalise the arrangement with the canteen facility and ensure health regulations are met.

Outdoor courts

- There is limited potential to expand facilities and meet future growth in demand at Robertson Road due to relatively high level of development.
- The directions in the Moore Park South Master Plan regarding tennis should be considered when planning and developing the existing tennis courts.

- There is inconsistency in the management of the tennis courts, netball courts and basketball courts and related bookings.
- There is a need to upgrade the netball and basketball courts.
- The region provides other higher standard courts and users could be lost if the Robertson Road facility continues to decline.
- The amenities linked to the outdoor courts are poor quality. Netball players use toilets in the Equestrian Centre, and this raises safety issues (isolation and road crossing).
- There is a lack of parking with only around 30 places close to the facility.
- Whilst the Family Entertainment Precinct car park is located nearby, it is a little isolated from the courts, particularly for night games.
- There is a perception that the area is unsafe at night, especially by females.
- Users experience security issues such as car theft and bag snatches.

Equestrian

- The cost of developing and managing the equestrian facilities in the Parklands is high. However, horses contribute to the uniqueness and diversity of the Parklands.
- The operation of the Equestrian Centre requires significant subsidisation.
- The fees for the Equestrian Centre are considered to be low by centre management. However, some people struggle with the fees and the capacity for a significant fee increase is likely to be limited.
- The cost of feeding and supporting a horse is increasing, including feed costs and insurance costs.
- There are issues associated in working with nine businesses and the number may need to reduce in the future.
- There is a need for greater controls over the various operations in the Equestrian Centre. All existing licences expire in April 2004 and can be reviewed.
- The future use of 'C' Pavilion in the Equestrian Centre is currently unresolved.
- There is a lack of management at the Equestrian Centre on weekends, which is one of the busiest times.
- There is debate as to whether there should be fencing along both sides of the equestrian track for safety reasons.
- An emphasis on safety is required in planning for and managing equestrian facilities and activities.
- The demand for organised events such as polo and pony club activities is increasing.
- Ongoing consultation with equestrian users is required to address conflicts and consider needs and issues.

Cycling

- There are a number of Park safety and courtesy issues relating to large groups of cyclists (bunches) training in the Parklands and particularly around Centennial Park.
- There is some demand for organised mountain bike riding. However, the potential erosion and impact on the Parklands is likely to be high.
- There is limited promotion of the cycling opportunities or requirements.

Golf

- There is potential to upgrade the Moore Park Golf Course site (clubhouse, golf course, driving range, car parking, surrounds).
- The clubhouse is ageing and in need of enhancement. There is potential to establish a more 'up market' facility given its prime location and link to the golf course.
- There is justification to review the fees for the golf course, given the Group 1 rating and prime inner city location of the course.
- Clear management guidelines and directions are required regarding responsibilities, the licence agreement and the opportunities to increase the facility use, promotion and activities.
- There is a distinct lack of car parking, which impacts on the aesthetics and function of the facility.
- Insurance claims are high, eg golf balls hitting cars.
- There are some concerns regarding the access to the facility by the wide community and visitors.
- As a public golf course, the facility needs to be widely promoted and made accessible to non members.
- There are existing and potential conflicts with pedestrians and dogs and course users.

Other organised sport or recreation use of Centennial Parklands

- A number of trainers and instructors use the Parklands for organised and 'fee for service' activities. There are various issues relating to these activities, including:
 - No control over the number of groups using the Parklands at one time
 - The population in the region is increasing and this could increase the demand for health, fitness or sports training (and organised activities)
 - No control over the number of participants involved in each group
 - Groups are using spaces without paying a fee (this could be seen as an inequity issue for sporting groups and schools who pay)
 - It is not known whether trainers and instructors have the appropriate insurance and industry recognition to operate
 - If an operator is not insured and an injury occurs, the Trust could be at greater risk of being targeted for liability
 - No control over the areas that groups use
 - Potential noise and music impacts
 - No control over the equipment that groups use
 - There are potential impacts on other Centennial Parklands users
- The current and expected high level of use of Centennial Parklands, the limitations of the resource in relation to size and the number of grounds and facilities, and the requirement that the Parklands are not over developed, collectively limit the potential to cater for other sports and activities.

Strategies

Strategies have been developed to contribute to addressing the issues outlined in the previous section. A summary of the strategies is provided below:

Broad directions

- Adopt a regional approach to planning for, providing and allocating sporting facilities and grounds, eg involve Local Councils and state government.
- Adopt strategies that improve security and safety in Centennial Parklands (including people's sense of security and safety), eg light options.
- Adopt the Transport, Access and Parking Plan to improve parking and access to sports grounds and facilities.
- Increase the communication with and involvement of sport and organised activity groups, eg establish Project Advisory Group, hold annual network session, continue to improve sporting groups and schools in allocations, distribute a seasonal newsletter, include information on website.
- Provide information on sporting groups and activity opportunities to the public through Centennial Parklands' website and other media.

Sporting grounds

- Better manage the use of sports grounds to reduce the risk of over use and increase the quality of grounds, eg increase recovery time for playing fields, spread use of grounds to minimize impacts, determine appropriate number of hours each field can sustain.
- Better manage the allocation of grounds to reflect demand, the quality of grounds and the appropriate level of use.
- Establish higher standard amenities that service sport and organised activity groups in accordance with the Centennial Parklands Amenities Master Plan.
- Consider increasing the number of higher quality grounds to cater for higher grades and broaden the potential use of the grounds, e.g. irrigate and improve drainage of the Brazilian Fields, explore potential and demand for synthetic turf.
- Investigate opportunities for establishing additional sports fields to cater for demand and enable greater flexibility in the allocation and management of fields.
- Investigate the requests for other structures, eg consider opportunities for one or two cricket net structures.
- Support the affordable use of Centennial Parklands by schools, but ensure equity in the allocation of grounds and avoid control of areas and facilities.
- Review the existing fee structure and policy for sports grounds. This includes considering the use of any additional fees raised to enhance sport.
- Consult with the Local Councils in the area to develop a regional strategy on field lighting and as part of the regional strategy, consider lighting a small number of playing fields to contribute to catering for night training and games in the region.

ES Marks

- Implement the safety audit recommendations made by Det Norske Veritas according to the risk priority.
- Investigate the strategic planning directions in the Moore Park South Master Plan. If an athletics facility in ES Marks is not found to be feasible, then a regional strategy should be developed to ensure athletics is appropriately catered for in the region.
- Maintain the track to a standard that is safe to users and low risk to the Trust.
- Address the 'throwing' issue further to the Det Norske Veritas report.

Outdoor courts

- Improve the quality and safety of the netball courts, including upgrade surface quality and line marketing, repair court lighting, and maintain goal posts to good standard.
- Improve the quality and safety of the basketball/roller hockey courts as above.
- Maintain the tennis complex to a safe and appealing standard.
- Establish lighting and pathways around Robertson Road to create an area where users feel safer.
- Manage the sports using the area to minimise the impacts on local residents, eg management of loud speaker systems and appropriate location of lights.

Equestrian

- Continue to maintain the equestrian facilities to a high standard for the safety and appeal of the users and the wider users of Centennial Parklands.
- Consider upgrading the track as part of the redesign of the Grand Drive Precinct (appropriate to the regulated use of the track and safety requirements).
- Undertake a staged upgrade of the Equestrian Grounds in accordance with agreed plans.
- Continue to manage the Equestrian Centre to a high standard and undertake actions that contribute to servicing users and the longer term sustainability of the centre.
- Explore the appropriateness of equestrian events in appropriate areas in Centennial Parklands, eg polo, show jumping, dressage.
- Review the use of equestrian facilities by organised groups; eg pony clubs, mounted police.

Cycling

- Support cycle events where appropriate and promote an awareness of the cycling opportunities in Centennial Parklands.
- Continue to work with cycling groups to better manage cycling in the Parklands and develop a code of conduct.
- Develop a strategy for promoting the regulations and code of conduct, involving cycling groups in the promotion.
- Work with cyclists to require all bunch cyclists to meet Centennial Parklands regulations and codes of conduct (including encouraging self regulation within cycling).
- Maintain the quality of the cycle track to a good and safe standard as part of ongoing Grand Drive maintenance.

Golf

- Implement the directions in the Moore Park South Master Plan according to priorities and available resources.
- Continue to support and guide the operations of the Moore Park Golf Course to maintain a facility that is available, appealing and valued.
- Assist in promoting the Moore Park Golf Club and the activity of golf, including the promotion of events and activities to increase participation.

Other organised sport or recreation use of Centennial Parklands

- Guide the organised use of Centennial Parklands for training and instruction. This could relate to personal trainers, fitness instructors, runners, coaches and others involved in training or instruction. In order to guide this use:
 - Work with Local Councils in the areas surrounding Centennial Parklands to develop a guide that can be used across the region
 - Liaise with and involve the relevant industry bodies in developing a guide
 - Develop 'training and instruction' guidelines in consultation with Local Councils, industry bodies and users
- Investigate opportunities for providing other organised activities in Centennial Parklands such as sports camps and participation programs (coordinated by activity providers).
- Manage the integration of other organised activities such as rollerblading, orienteering and organised walks and exercise, to minimise the impacts on the character of Centennial Parklands and other users.
- In accordance with the Centennial Parklands Conservation Management Plan, limit the development of additional structures to cater for other organised activities.

Implementation and review

Approach to implementation

The first step to implementation was to obtain endorsement from the Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy by the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, which has been achieved.

Following this, the Sports Strategy is being implemented through day to day operational resources and the Centennial Parklands Park Improvement Plan. A number of the strategies and actions can be achieved within the next five years (up to 2009) and some will require longer timeframes, ie up to 10 years (up to 2014).

An Action Plan has been developed to provide a 'working document' for Centennial Parklands staff that clearly states 'what should be done and when it should be done'. The Action includes details of specific actions, the priorities, timeframes and responsibilities.

The implementation of the Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy will require support from sport and organised activity groups and other potential partners including local and state government. Ongoing communication and partnerships with user groups, representative bodies, relevant state government departments and local government will be essential to achieve the directions in the Sports Strategy.

The establishment of a Project Advisory Group that has a clearly defined strategic role in guiding the implementation of the Sports Strategy should also be considered.

It is important to note that the Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy and the Action Plan does not commit the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust or any other body to funding an action. The actions and strategies in the Sports Strategy are desired outcomes that the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust will endeavour to achieve with the support of other groups and in accordance with other priorities.

Ongoing review

The Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy will be an evolving 'working' document that is continually assessed to reflect changing priorities, needs and opportunities. Timeframes can be changed, additional actions can be added and further partnerships can be identified.

The Action Plan will be reviewed by Centennial Parklands staff on an annual basis, with input from sport and organised activity groups and the broader community. This could be achieved through the ongoing involvement of a Project Advisory Group and the Centennial Parklands Community Consultative Committee.

Any review of the Centennial Parklands Sports Strategy should consider:

- The justification for any changes.
- The availability of resources to address new actions such as in the Park Improvement Plan.
- The consistency with directions in other strategic and planning documents.
- The level of internal and external support for the change.