



## Submission re SHFT Draft Recreation Strategy on behalf of Mosman Football Club, Manly Warringah Football Association and Manly United – May 2019

### Executive Summary

- Mosman Football Club (MFC) is a large, inclusive football club with a 50+ year association with SHFT lands at George Heights and Middle Head.
- MFC and our association, which includes around 19,000 active players from Warringah and MacKeller, is responsible for over 75,000 discrete visits to SHFT land.
- Football is Australia’s largest team sport: 5.4 per cent of the adult (15 years old +) male population regularly participates in football, with more than 396,000 girls and women participating, one of the highest numbers of any sport. More than 681,000 children aged up to 14 years took part in organised out-of-school football.<sup>1</sup>
- “Football plays such an important role in our communities, providing significant physical and mental health benefits, helping the fight against obesity, promoting social cohesion and multicultural inclusion”<sup>2</sup>.
- SHFT can improve its sporting facilities to provide greater amenity to both the football and wider community by supporting the following projects:
  - Add lights to Georges Heights Oval to promote greater community use for football, other sports and passive recreation
  - Upgrade the Middle Head Oval pavilion to provide facilities for football and other users
  - Improve the playing surface at Middle Head to allow greater use

Mosman Football Club welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the SHFT’s Draft Recreation Strategy on behalf of the Northern Beaches football community.



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<sup>1</sup> Source: Press release issued by the Football Federation of Australia on 29 April 2019 which quotes the AusPlay survey.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Press release issued by the Football Federation of Australia on 29 April 2019.



## About Mosman Football Club

- Mosman Football Club was founded in 1967 and has grown to be the largest community sporting club in Mosman, serving more than 1,900 female and male players from four to older than 60. We aim to provide a fun and safe environment for our members to play football and offer a range of development programs. We are a grassroots community club run largely by volunteers. We provide support to members from qualified coaches to enable all players, coaches and team managers to develop to the best of their ability.
- Within our winter competition, we have 1,055 male and 335 female players (24% of total, which is marginally higher than the state average) across all divisions spanning from under 6 to over 45 including men's and women's premier league teams through to divisions where the priority is social and physical activity over performance. We also run a summer 5-a-side competition with circa 1,000 members.
- MFC is one of the largest clubs within our association, Manly Warringah Football Association (MWFA) which encompasses the Northern Beaches and the federal electorates of Warringah and MacKeller.
- The MWFA has around 19,000 members, and many of these would play at SHFT over the course of the football season. Including parents and players, Football is therefore responsible for over 75,000 discrete visits to SHFT lands over the winter and summer seasons.
- Our club offers a wide range of development programs including 'Minikickers' for pre-schoolers, introducing them to football and helping to develop their coordination and social skills. More recently we commenced a mentoring program to encourage youths to become coaches. This helps develop their leadership skills as well as providing them with a means to contribute to the club and community. We also run/contribute to various charity fundraising activities, including hosting the Pink Cup which is for women over 30 from across the Northern Beaches to raise money for the nominated charity, in 2019 that was Lifeline.
- We have a 50+ year association with Middle Head Oval (MHO) and Georges Heights Oval (GHO) dating from the club's foundation. We pay to use fields and have consistently contributed to the ground improvements, particularly at GHO.
- Games played at MHO also see players, referees, and spectators pay for parking and supporting the businesses at Georges Heights and Middle Head. Mosman FC is the only MWFA club which has home grounds with paid parking and this imposition resulted in our club having to defend our right to play home matches at Middle Head Oval.





## Social impact of Football

- Football is a form of active recreation that delivers numerous benefits across a number of dimensions, many of which align closely with the aims and aspirations of the SHFT. We appreciate the SHFT's ongoing support for the Club's activities and are encouraged by this Strategy and the possibility of enhanced facilities.
- About 4% of the world's population plays football making it the largest team sport in the world. Football is also the largest team sport in Australia with over 1.76 million participants and in NSW where over 430,000 adults and 290,000 children actively play.
- Football is also the largest team sport for women and girls, with female members a growing proportion of club, association and state football.
- Football provides physical activity and social networks that improve mental health by reducing anxiety and depression, particularly in young people. New formats such as Over 35/45 men and Over 30/40 women have allowed players to continue to play into their 60s.



- Participation in grassroots football therefore contributes to a broad range of social benefits such as community cohesion, social mobility, social inclusion and social capital. Unlike many other sports, the cultural base of the participant base is highly reflective of the diversity within the general population. Due to global familiarity and passion for the game, participants of diverse cultural background are drawn to the game without active recruitment. Football offers a familiar and welcoming environment from which to begin to create strong links within the local community.





- Overall, this popularity has increased demand for quality fields with adequate lighting that exceeds supply in the Northern Beaches, leading to ongoing investment in the quantity and quality of facilities by the community and all levels of government.
- Weekend football brings thousands of players from the Northern Beaches region to the grounds over the course of a season, expanding exposure to the Headland Park, its attractions and tenant businesses.

### SHFT Sport Facilities Improvements

- MFC is encouraged by the intention to retain and enhance Middle Head and Georges Heights with continuing availability for community use.
- MFC has been challenged by the shortage of sports fields to meet the playing and training needs of its members. In this respect, the Club's experience is consistent with that of other parties referenced in the report.
- It is also MFC's view, consistent with studies referenced in the Draft Recreation Strategy, that there are opportunities for an expanded functionality of the facilities to enable their use by the wider community in a more extensive way.



- **Georges Heights Lights.** Adding lights to Georges Heights is a way for SHFT, MFC, MWFA and Mosman Council to increase capacity for both organised sport and informal recreational activity:
  - The oval and adjacent parkland is empty after sunset as there is no lighting, in winter that means from 5pm. This means there is a significantly under-utilised resource which could potentially provide more sport capacity and promote passive recreation.
  - Modern lighting technology reduces light spillage and the lights would not be used after 9:15pm, minimising the impact on the small number of neighbouring houses, most of which are sheltered by the existing tree canopy (for more information on lighting, please see additional information at the end of this submission).



- We are able to fund this project from the club's resources, the MWFA development fund and Government grants. There would also be a need to improve the playing surface there and, again, we would be happy to work with Council and contribute to that cost.
- The Club acknowledges the need for a formal proposal for the installation of lights at Georges Heights Oval to be made including a needs assessment and environmental impact analysis and urges that this process commences as soon as possible.
- **Middle Head Oval Pavilion.** We have also been engaging with Mosman Council and Mosman Swans Junior AFL Club regarding a new pavilion at MHO. We have discussed a design that meets the requirements of SHFT, those of the community sporting groups that use the oval and those of other SHFT users. We would support an aesthetically pleasing and practical building with seating areas allowing spectators and members of the public to enjoy the spectacular outlook from the oval.



- **Middle Head Oval Surface.** We had hoped that additional capacity would have been achieved by installing an all-weather pitch at Middle Head Oval. The new turf grass there will hopefully provide a better playing and training surface that lasts longer into the winter season and requires less maintenance. Regardless, it does not provide additional capacity. We note the intention to review the surface at Middle Head Oval in 2022 and hope that SHFT is open to reconsidering an all-weather pitch should the new natural grass surface prove not to be capable of coping with the current and growing demand for sports fields.

Best Regards,

Louise Walker  
President Mosman FC

David Mason  
CEO of Manly Warringah Football Association  
and Manly United



## **Additional information on lighting at Georges Heights Oval**

There is widespread recognition that one of the most effective ways to make more efficient use of sporting facilities is to improve lighting. Let's Light Up Football is a campaign currently being run for the second year by Football NSW to support clubs and schools to install lighting at fields in order to help provide the infrastructure needed to support the growing interest in playing football.

Locally, Northern Beaches Council (NBC) has upgraded 20 sports field lighting systems over the last 3 years.

The lighting systems comply with Australian standards which cover obtrusive light (light spill). NBC uses 10 lux as the limit for obtrusive light (light spill) as this is the most stringent limit in the obtrusive light standard, e.g. for environmentally sensitive areas.

They have been able to design systems that keep the spill below 5 lux, with all of the recent installations having a light spill of less than 5 lux. By using louvres, they can reduce both the glare and the spill.

They also use DALI controls on the LED systems to adjust the lights down to meet and not exceed the standard. This reduces the power required to run the lights while maintaining compliance with the standards. This technology enables a more efficient result.

The Philips LED lights they use are now eligible for Renewable Energy Certificates from the Australian Government.