

Westleigh Park – Sporting Facility

Speaking Points



Monday 16th September 2024

NSROC's Executive Director appeared before the Sydney North Planning Panel to speak on behalf of its member councils in support of the redevelopment of Westleigh Park.

Good morning. It is my pleasure to appear before you today representing the eight NSROC member councils in strong and united support of the Westleigh Park DA.

Westleigh Park is a unique greenfield opportunity for the establishment of new, additional sportsgrounds and recreational facilities that will service the NSROC region as well as its neighboring LGAs.

The eight NSROC member councils are:

- Hunter's Hill Council
- Ku-ring-gai Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Lane Cove Council
- North Sydney Council
- Mosman Municipal Council
- City of Ryde and
- Willoughby City Council

Together we service an area of 639km² extending from the Hawkesbury River in the north to Sydney Harbour in the south, and west to Meadowbank on the Parramatta River.

NSROC has a population of over 650,000 people which is expected to grow to over 750,000 by 2041. So too, will the need for a wide variety of open, green spaces and sports fields.

The well-planned mix of infrastructure proposed for Westleigh Park is vital for our growing community's health, wellbeing, cohesion and liveability.

Our *Review of Supply and Demand for Sports Facilities in the NSROC Region* released in late 2023 provides data and evidence of a critical need to increase the current supply capacity of NSROC sports facilities:

- by 40% by 2026 (equivalent to 181Ha of total space) and
- 49% by 2036 (equivalent to 222Ha of total space) in order to meet projected population growth for the area.

In recognition of its contribution to the sector, the NSROC Review was awarded the NSW Parks and Leisure Research Award for Excellence, and its evidence-based findings should not be ignored.

It is also worth noting that the estimates in our Review were made prior to the release of recent housing targets and planning reforms that will facilitate a more rapid and significant increase in housing density for the region. This increase in population will further exacerbate the supply gap for sporting facilities across northern Sydney.

Importantly, the proposal before you is the result of a thorough planning process resulting in a suite of integrated facilities that suit the location. In addition to organised sport, Westleigh Park will also support cycling and mountain biking, walking paths, informal exercise spaces, children's playground and picnic areas, connections to local and regional bushwalking trails and passive recreation spaces. Activities that can be enjoyed by our local communities as well as those from across Sydney more broadly.

NSROC has reviewed the planning merits of the application, and we strongly endorse the design which has been prepared to respond to the environmental constraints of the land. For example, the playing fields are located in the largely cleared areas with the least constraints. The design incorporates appropriate access, parking and amenities buildings, to facilitate community use and minimise impacts on the surrounding area. It will also be managed by an appropriate plan of management.

The opportunities presented by this site are significant. As such, its regional importance is recognised in the NSROC Infrastructure Priorities Statement where it is highlighted as a priority and has the absolute support of all the councils in the region. Every Council across NSW is under increasing pressure to take on additional housing. The downstream impact of this will be increasing demand for access to sports fields and recreational facilities. It is an issue that affects every Regional Organisation of Councils in NSW. The Westleigh Park facilities will benefit many other Sydney communities beyond Hornsby and NSROC.

The proposed redevelopment of Westleigh Park is a unique opportunity in the northern Sydney region to provide for our growing communities. It is critical for the maintenance of a liveable and cohesive community.

In closing, I commend Westleigh Park to you and ask that you consider not only the proposal's benefits to the local community but also the long term benefits to the broader NSROC region and surrounding suburbs.

The proposed redevelopment is well planned and strikes a balance between recreational activities and preserving the surrounding high value bushland that will be enjoyed now and into the future by generations to come.

- ENDS -