

## Future use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport

**Report contact**

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**Approving officer**

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**Meeting**

Council

**Date**

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the planning and costs to accommodate the needs of identified clubs located in the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham catchments at Frank Smith Park. The next steps in the process are provided for consideration, noting that a partnership approach with the City of Mitcham is suggested given the catchment considerations.

### 2. Recommendations

That Council note that:

\*\*\*Please refer to meeting minutes for recommendations\*\*\*

1. options to accommodate the needs of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club at locations other than Frank Smith Park have been identified, present the most cost effective and timely opportunities at this point in time, and that City of Onkaparinga staff will continue to advocate for access at these locations including, but not limited to, the Women's Memorial Playing Fields and Blackwood High School.
2. in 2022 City of Onkaparinga staff will engage with City of Mitcham and other stakeholders to finalise district needs analysis for the Mitcham Hills and Onkaparinga Northern Hills districts to confirm the level demand and potential user groups and that this information be used to inform funding arrangements for future works.
3. the prioritisation of capital funding for the delivery of playing surface improvements at Frank Smith Park needs to be considered in the context of other major sport infrastructure projects across the City of Onkaparinga.
4. the Sturt Lions will be granted a permit for use of Frank Smith Park for junior soccer for the 2022 season and that feedback on this use will be sought from the park users and adjacent residents to support decision making on possible extension of use.

### 3. Executive summary

Frank Smith Park is located on Council's northern boundary and services the communities of both the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham. For some time, the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club, who have equal members from each Council area, have been advocating for formalisation of the turf playing field in the park. The Sturt Lions Football Club (based in the City of Mitcham) have also requested use of Frank Smith Park for the playing of junior female soccer, however are not seeking playing surface improvements at this point in time.

Based on known costs for similar projects, the cost of formalising the Frank Smith Park playing surface for organised sport with infrastructure which delivers the required level of service is approximately \$0.7M. The provision of supporting infrastructure which manages the impacts on the nature landscape and amenity of the broader park is estimated at an additional \$1.5M. These costs exclude any changeroom facility.

Research undertaken in 2020 to inform the 2020–2025 Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan identified Frank Smith Park as a key site and one of five ovals contributing to the supply of outdoor sport in the Northern District of the City of Onkaparinga.

Formalisation of the playing surface at Frank Smith Park to support greater use for organised sport is therefore supported in-principle, however the timing of investment needs to be considered in the context of:

- other existing ovals within the City of Mitcham and surrounding areas which may meet the needs of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club and Sturt Lions Football Club
- the location of Frank Smith Park and its role in meeting the sport and recreation needs of both the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham
- other demands/projects for new play surface development (ovals/pitches) within the City of Onkaparinga and the additional infrastructure Frank Smith Park (intersection treatments, access roads, car parking, player amenities etc.) that would be required to support its increased use for organised sport
- the readiness of the community for increased formal sporting use of Frank Smith Park given its popularity for informal recreation and the value place on its natural landscape and amenity.

The City of Onkaparinga's level of future investment in the playing surface and supporting infrastructure needs to also be considered in the context of the communities and clubs that it services. Whilst the City of Onkaparinga does have a role, preliminary investigations suggest that the membership base of the main clubs that will seek to use the playing service reside in the City of Mitcham.

It is proposed that council staff continue to partner with City of Mitcham staff in an effort to secure access to existing playing fields to meet the short term needs of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club, whilst at the same time finalising detailed district needs analysis for the Mitcham Hills and Onkaparinga Northern Hills districts to inform the Frank Smith Park project planning. It is suggested that Council formally approach the City of Mitcham as a potential funding partner as part of future project planning

## 4. Background

Community Plan 2030	<b>people:</b> connected, engaged, active, healthy We connect people and the spaces they enjoy, including trails, open spaces and other places to be active.
Policy and/or relevant legislation	The directions of this report align with the objectives of Council's Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan, particularly: Goal 3: Improve Facilities We will provide safe, welcoming and fit for purpose sport and active recreation facilities and that meet community demand.
Who did we talk to/who will we be talking to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Mitcham</li> <li>• Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club</li> <li>• Sturt Lions Football Club</li> <li>• Blackwood High School</li> <li>• South Australian Cricket Association (SACA)</li> <li>• Football Federation of South Australia (FFSA)</li> <li>• SANFL</li> </ul>

At the Council meeting on 19 October 2021, following a joint deputation by the Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club and Sturt Lions Football Club, Council considered a Notice of Motion from Cr Themeliotis regarding access to playing fields for both clubs.

In response Council noted that:

*City of Onkaparinga staff will continue to work with the Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club, Sturt Lions Football Club, Coromandel Primary School, SACA, Football SA, City of Mitcham and relevant state government agencies to develop a plan and costings to accommodate the needs of these clubs located in the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham catchments at Frank Smith Park.*

*That a report come back to the Council meeting of January 2022.*

Elected Members were updated on 21 January 2022 with the factors affecting the rescheduling of this report and the relevant clubs were also informed.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the planning and costs to accommodate identified clubs located in the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham catchments at Frank Smith Park.

### Planning Context

Frank Smith Park is located on Magarey Road, Coromandel Valley. Attachment 1 contains two maps. One showing the location and boundaries of Frank Smith Park, and the other the location of Frank Smith Park relative to other ovals and sports complexes referenced in this report.

The park is located on the edge of the Sturt River and forms part of the boundary with the City of Mitcham. Key features of the park are an unirrigated playing field, wetlands, path linkages that allow access from the Sturt River Linear Park through to Belair National Park and surrounds, BMX tracks and a range of natural environments.

The park is currently well used by local residents, the Coromandel Valley Primary School and for junior soccer. The junior school soccer is coordinated/administered by the Southern Districts Junior Soccer Association and Frank Smith is used as a home field for three primary schools (Belair, Eden Hills and Coromandel Valley) on Saturday mornings during terms 2 and 3.

Frank Smith Park was identified in council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategic Management Plan 2014–2019 as a potential location for an additional playing surface (oval/pitch) to meet the needs of increased demand for organised sport in this Northern District. In response a future project was included in council's Major Project Fund.

Development of a draft master plan for Frank Smith Park, aimed at enhancing it for community use, commenced in 2019. In mid-2021 the project was placed on hold following the adoption of council's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and the resultant impacts on council's financial capacity to deliver major projects. The project is currently unfunded.

The need for additional investment in sporting infrastructure at Frank Smith Park was also linked to other planning processes with the potential to impact on recreational use throughout the district and influence the future demand for playing surfaces at Frank Smith Park. These include:

- Planning for development of clubrooms/changerooms at Hawthorndene Oval (Apex Park) to meet the needs of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club
- Belair National Park Master Plan which explored, amongst other things, the potential for the park to increase its capacity to support organised sport.

The Belair National Park Master Plan is now finalised and has not delivered the opportunities targeted by those clubs seeking to use Frank Smith Park, those being the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club or Sturt Lions Football Club.

Planning for infrastructure at Hawthorndene Oval is ongoing, with the project facing significant budget pressures. Tenders for the proposed building have closed, and the nature and timing of the development will be dependent on the ability to manage project cost within available budgets.

Due to the challenges of the Hawthorndene Oval project and pressures for oval space, the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club have been advocating for access to, and investment in, Frank Smith Park.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Clubs seeking access to Frank Smith Park for organised sport

The following section provides information on the two clubs seeking to access to Frank Smith Park for organised sport.

#### **Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club**

The Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club (CVRCC) are the third largest cricket club within the Onkaparinga council region with 226 members in 2020/21. Of the club's 226 members, 54 per cent live in the City of Onkaparinga. CVRCC are a strong, well-established club fielding five senior teams, five junior teams as well as delivering introductory programs for young players through Master Blasters and Junior Blasters (30 children). They have also implemented a Women's Social Smash program. They are well positioned to cater for growth.

They currently utilise three sites for training and matches:

- Hawthorndene Oval (City of Mitcham)
- Weymouth Oval (City of Onkaparinga)
- Hawthorndene Primary School Oval (City of Mitcham).

There are some constraints and shortcomings with the use of these sites as shown in the table below. This has prompted the club to investigate other oval locations and options, including interest in Frank Smith Park.

<b>Site</b>	<b>Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club utilisation</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
Hawthorndene Oval	A and B grade games. Weekend use only	Limited to weekend use. No weekday day use for club as per Community Land Management Plan. Current upgrade to site (changerooms, amenities) pending with City of Mitcham. No clubrooms or training nets considered in the current proposal.
Weymouth Oval	All training, evening games and C grade games	Most utilised ground by club – small oval only suitable for lower grades. No changerooms.
Hawthorndene Primary School Oval	D and E grade games	Small oval suitable for junior cricket only. Poor condition (ruts) present. No changerooms

Consultation with the Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club occurred to inform preparation of the draft Frank Smith Park Master Plan. The club indicated that Frank Smith Park would be a preferred option for the club due to the large number of members from the surrounding suburbs making the location convenient. There are existing cricket facilities on site including a pitch and cricket nets, however the oval requires upgrading to meet club requirements for cricket – particularly in relation to having adequate turf quality and coverage in summer. The turf area is currently un-irrigated.

The Coromandel Ramblers have been working closely with the City of Mitcham to develop facilities at Hawthorndene Oval to support the club activities and growth. As a result of ongoing community consultation and the design process, original plans have been scaled back after consideration of Community Land Management Plans and resident feedback. As such the club are unable to train there during the week with weekend access only.

If the proposed changerooms and supporting club amenities cannot be delivered at Hawthorndene Oval, the Coromandel Ramblers are prepared to consider Frank Smith Park as their future main/home ground.

### **Sturt Lions Football Club**

The Sturt Lions Football Club are the third largest football (soccer) club in the state with 741 members and over 100 volunteers. Of this 26 per cent of members (192) live in the City of Onkaparinga. The Sturt Lions Football Club operate out of locations in Eden Hills, Blackwood, Bedford Park, Seaview High School and West Shores, sharing facilities with AFL, high schools and Flinders University.

To support the Sturt Lions Football Clubs's large operations and management of teams, they have expressed interest in using Frank Smith Park for junior soccer on Sunday mornings. The club would not require any upgrades for this to use to occur. They acknowledge that a licence for the club fits within the current Community Land Management Plan and request that Council consider entering into a licence with the club.

It is important to note that Sturt Lions Football Club have existing facility upgrades in the pipeline that will support the ongoing operations and growth of their club. This includes a

\$2.85m clubroom and synthetic pitch development at Karinya Reserve, Eden Hills which is currently under construction.

It is proposed to enter into license arrangement with the club to test the suitability of Frank Smith Park for use by the Sturt Lions Football Club for its 2022 winter season. Existing facilities and sports infrastructure on site can cater to this request and the use is consistent with that of the Southern Districts Junior Soccer Association/Department for Education on Saturdays.

Feedback on this use will be sought from the park users and adjacent residents toward the end of the licence period to support decision making on possible extension of use.

### **Alternative Options**

Whilst upgrade of the playing surface at Frank Smith Park is one option to support formal utilisation by sporting clubs in the future, there are other options currently available that have the potential to meet the requirements of cricket and soccer clubs in the near future.

Ovals/fields at Blackwood High School, the Women's Memorial Playing Fields (St Marys) and pitches at Cove Sports Complex have potential to accommodate the needs of these clubs. There is an opportunity to further explore these options concurrently and discussions with Blackwood High School, the City of Mitcham and the City of Marion have commenced in this regard. In terms of meeting the needs of cricket and soccer clubs, it is practical to explore/exhaust these options prior to committing to further planning/investment at Frank Smith Park.

Further information on each of these sites is included below.

### **Womens Memorial Playing Fields (WMPF)**

The City of Mitcham have submitted a proposal to the Office for Recreation Sport and Racing to enter a long-term arrangement to operate WMPF located in St Marys. The City of Mitcham formally considered the matter at its Council's Meeting held on 14 September 2021. To assist in understanding the potential use of this site they are currently seeking expressions of interest from existing WMPF tenants and City of Mitcham sporting club lease and license holders for potential use of Women's Memorial Playing Fields. Coromandel Valley Cricket Club and Sturt Lions Football Club have been encouraged to register their interest.

### **Blackwood High School**

Blackwood High School have a history of accommodating community club sport on site, most recently the Keswick Cricket Club. Since COVID-19, school policy around community access and its response to pandemic has led to the cricket club moving to other locations. Early discussions with the High School have commenced to investigate future use of the oval by local clubs in the City of Mitcham and City of Onkaparinga. City of Mitcham staff have agreed to work with our staff to advocate for access by clubs in the district.

### **Cove Sports Complex**

A new Southern Soccer Facility is being developed on Majors Road, O'Halloran Hill to cater for the Cove Soccer Club and will be licenced to the Club providing them use seven days per week. This facility will essentially be replacing their access and use of the Cove Sports Complex soccer pitch and will accommodate their significant growth.

The City of Marion are considering an expression of interest process to identify future users for the pitch at the Cove Sporting Complex and are considering that space as a multi-use playing field. As such, there may be potential opportunity for the Sturt Lions Football Club dependant on other requests that the City of Marion receive.

## 5.2. District Needs Analysis

To inform the Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan 2020–2025 a Sport and Active Recreation Research and Analysis Study was undertaken in 2020. The study included a Gap and Opportunity Analysis which mapped existing facilities by sport and district and analysed anticipated demand for future facilities. In the study Frank Smith Park is identified as a key site and one of five ovals contributing to the supply of outdoor sport in the Northern District of the City of Onkaparinga.

Whilst the immediate needs of the both Coromandel Ramblers and Sturt Lions Football Club are recognised, the need for formalisation/upgrade of sporting fields at Frank Smith Park in the short term needs to be assessed in a district catchment beyond the City of Onkaparinga. This needs to be in the context of, and with consideration to, which communities and clubs the infrastructure will be servicing.

Following recent discussions with City of Mitcham it has been identified that clubs such as Blackwood Football Club (AFL) are seeking the use of secondary ovals to cater for growth. In this respect, and whilst the City of Onkaparinga has a role, it is possible that Frank Smith Park could be strategically more important for clubs beyond the City of Onkaparinga and for sports other than cricket and soccer.

Given that the location is important for servicing both City of Mitcham and City of Onkaparinga it is recommended that planning for this site be progressed in close consultation and partnership with the City of Mitcham and its community.

From a City of Onkaparinga perspective, in the north we are experiencing pressures on the ovals and courts at Reynella, Happy Valley and Flagstaff Hill Sport Complexes due to growth in participation. In order to assist in relieving this pressure Council's endorsed Election Advocacy Plan identifies the need for a \$2M investment in the oval and supporting infrastructure at Serpentine Reserve to accommodate this increasing demand for turf-based sports. New facilities include sports lighting, change room facilities, and improved car parking.

Serpentine reserve is located central to northern sports complexes and clubs listed above and is therefore well positioned strategically and spatially to meet the needs of these communities.

Therefore, the prioritisation of capital funding for the delivery of playing surface improvements and supporting assets and infrastructure at Frank Smith Park needs to be considered in the context of other major sport infrastructure projects across the City of Onkaparinga. These are listed below from north to south:

- Northern District: Serpentine Reserve, O'Halloran Hill
- Central North District: Noarlunga United Soccer facility, Wilfred Taylor Reserve, Morphet Vale
- Central North District: Knox Park, Christies Downs
- Central South: Prow Drive, Seaford

Each of sites above are reflected in Council's approved Election Advocacy Plan.

Frank Smith Park does not present as a short term (0-3 year) priority due to relative need and the fact that other options are yet to be fully exhausted. The formalisation of oval/pitch space at Franks Smith Park is currently unfunded in Council's Major Projects Fund and Long-Term Financial Plan.

Frank Smith Park may present as a mid-term (4-7 year) option subject to appropriate consideration of other options, including schools in the catchment and sports fields within the City of Mitcham, outcomes of community engagement and securing of required budgets.

### 5.3. Project Costs

In line with the Council decision of October 2022, costs to accommodate the needs of identified clubs located in the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham catchments at Frank Smith Park have been investigated – albeit at a high level.

The current playing surface at Frank Smith Park is unirrigated levelled open space, with a concrete cricket wicket and no formal drainage system. The extent and nature of the playing surface largely reflects historical development when *'During the 1960s Frank developed a vision for a playing area for future generations and began work to create the oval. Work stopped in the late 1960s when excavation costs became too great.'*

Based on known costs for similar projects, the cost of formalising Frank Smith Park for organised sport to deliver the required level of service is estimated at approximately \$2.2M, broken down as follows:

- \$0.7M for the formalisation of the playing surface
- \$1.5M for supporting infrastructure, excluding clubroom/changeroom building.

As a minimum the follows works would be required to bring the playing surface up to an acceptable standard for senior club cricket. All costs are preliminary estimated only, based on similar projects and inclusive of preliminaries and contingencies.

Item	Preliminary Estimate
Demolition	\$65K
Earthworks (including Kaurna monitors)	\$110K
Drainage and turf	\$305K
Irrigation	\$205K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$685K</b>

It is recognised that the Coromandel Ramblers have sourced costs to improve and irrigate the area which are to the order of \$200k. Whilst this community led effort is acknowledged, additional works beyond this are required to ensure that the infrastructure delivered can be maintained at an appropriate standard (level of surface) to meet player and club expectations. Club expectation are reflected in the justifiable concerns regarding the oval condition at Hawthorndene Primary School.

### 5.4. Community Consultation

Plans to increase the use of, and further invest in, Frank Smith Park for organised sport needs to be carefully considered in the context of existing park users, adjacent residents (predominately located in the City of Mitcham) and adjoining land owners/uses including the Margarey apple orchard and associated operations.

Preliminary consultation with existing park users suggested that the park is valued for its natural setting and that formalisation for organised sport needs to be carefully balanced in this context.



Therefore, incremental testing/trialling of increased sport use to gauge community response is deemed appropriate and the proposed use by the Sturt Lions Football Club will enable this.

## 6. Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the proposals/recommendations of this report.

The Frank Smith Park project, previously scoped at approximately \$2M, is currently unfunded in Council's Major Projects Fund and does not form part of Council's current Long-Term Financial Plan.

Any budget allocations for planning and design works for Frank Smith Park will be considered and prioritised alongside other projects as part of Council's formal budget process in the context of the 10 Year Sports Assets Work Plan, Strategic Asset Management Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan.

It is also suggested that Council formally approach the City of Mitcham as a potential funding partner.

## 7. Risk and opportunity management

Risk	
Area	Mitigation
Expectations of club not being met	There is a risk that the recommendations of this report will not meet the expectations of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club. Options to accommodate the needs of the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club at locations other than Frank Smith Park have been identified and will be explored.
Community sentiment	Should there be a desire for the project planning and design to formally initiated, this should be informed by community and stakeholder consultation.
Political	Frank Smith Park is positioned to meet the needs of clubs and communities located in both the City of Mitcham and City of Onkaparinga. Ongoing consultation and a partnership approach will be required to ensure that pressures and expectations are managed.
Financial/business sustainability	Initiating a project at Frank Smith Park needs to be considered in the context of other project priorities and budget/financial parameters.

Opportunity	
Area	Maximising the opportunity
Partnership approach to planning and delivery of infrastructure improvements	A partnership approach with the City of Mitcham for the planning, consultation, design and construction of playing surface improvements presents as an opportunity given the location of the park on the City of Onkaparinga's northern boundary and the role of the oval/pitches in servicing the needs of both City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham communities and clubs.

## 8. Next steps

In line with the report recommendations, and subject to Council support, the following is proposed:

- that City of Onkaparinga staff will continue to advocate for access at these locations including, but not limited to, the WMPF and Blackwood High School.
- approach the City of Mitcham seeking its in-principle support to plan for the future of Frank Smith Park in partnership with the City of Onkaparinga including finalisation of a district needs analysis for the Mitcham Hills and Onkaparinga Northern Hills districts to inform the project planning.
- grant a permit for use of Frank Smith Park for junior soccer for the 2022/23 season and that feedback on this use will be sought from the park users and adjacent residents to support decision making on possible extension of use.

## 9. Attachments

Attachment 1 – Locations Maps (2 pages)

- END OF REPORT -

**Attachment 1**

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