



Plans to improve soccer facilities underway

Council has developed the 2016 Draft Soccer Facilities Plan to provide a strategic approach to addressing the current and future needs of soccer in South Gippsland. The draft plan, which is now available for public comment, was adopted at the recent Council meeting. Written submissions will be received until 3 August. The draft plan will also be distributed to soccer clubs and key stakeholders who were originally involved in its development.

Soccer participation in the Shire has increased substantially from previous seasons with an increase in 22 per cent from 2014 to 2015 at the four local soccer clubs, including over 100 female players. Manager Sustainable Communities, Chris Van Der Ark, said this had resulted in increased pressure on recreation reserve facilities that have already been adapted to provide for soccer.

“The 2016 Draft Soccer Facilities Plan recognises the increased pressure and identifies opportunities to improve soccer facilities to support the sport’s continued growth,” she explained

The draft plan was developed through consultation with local soccer clubs and relevant stakeholders. The project consultant met with all local soccer clubs, conducted site inspections, and gathered data via an online survey. The Gippsland Soccer League, Gippsport and Football Federation Victoria were also asked to provide comment, information and support during the development of the draft plan.

The four soccer clubs within the municipality are Mirboo North United at the Walter Tuck Recreation Reserve, Korumburra City at the Korumburra Recreation Reserve, Leongatha Knights at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College and Prom Coast at the Arthur Sutherland Reserve, Welshpool.

The draft plan identifies opportunities for improvements at these venues with the club’s themselves identifying a number of items as priorities. The community consultation process will provide an opportunity to confirm these priorities.

“All the existing venues were originally used for Australian Rules Football and not designed to suit the needs of soccer,” Mrs Van Der Ark said. “With the increased participation in soccer, the facilities at these venues have been adapted to provide for soccer. As interest continues to increase, especially with female participation, the condition and suitability of the facilities have presented more of a challenge.”

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