

## ATTACHMENT 3 - WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM WAVERLEY HOCKEY CLUB



[www.waverleyhc.org.au](http://www.waverleyhc.org.au)

### **Waverley Hockey Club**

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City of Monash  
via email

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021

### **Ashwood Reserve – Waverley Hockey Club Community Consultation feedback**

To Whom it May Concern

The Waverley Hockey Club (“WHC”) remains committed to the Ashwood Reserve re-development plan and confident the plan is an appropriate use of the area, as highlighted in the Ashwood Reserve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Hockey Field Feasibility Study – Final Report (“Feasibility study”).

Given WHC are the main beneficiaries of the plan, we ensured we attended the two public Community Consultation sessions to represent our Club, our more than 500 playing members (more than 200 of which are residents of Monash) and another 500+ non-playing supporters across past players, parents, family and friends. But we were conscious to allow and encourage contributions from concerned members of the public rather than rehash the benefits for WHC that were already outlined in the Feasibility study.

We have spent some time after the consultation sessions to discuss the concerns, WHC’s view of the impact and potential mitigations. We have outlined our considerations in the attached appendix.

We have also provided further information in the body of this letter in support of the proposal and covering our view of the main community concerns and the engagement with the other impacted organisation, the Victorian Sikh Association (VSA).

### ***Historical intentions for Ashwood Reserve***

WHC moved to Ashwood Reserve after the 1987 hockey season after having a number of different home locations in the preceding years. The City of Monash supported the move to Ashwood Reserve to provide a use for the area that was mostly unused at the time. The

original intention of the Reserve was for two hockey pitches – WHC and the City of Monash have worked on the plan for the second pitch for many years since.

### ***Benefits to the Monash community***

The Feasibility study references much of the need for WHC due to current capacity limits. There are also significant benefits to the Monash community. For example:

- WHC have a history of promoting hockey in minority groups and we have a diverse membership. An example is the Women Hitting It uP (WHIP) program we recently provided free of charge for women of all ages and abilities. We would be able to facilitate more programs like this with a second pitch
- Use of the facility by WHC and other groups will substantially increase resulting in more physical activity for Monash residents, including minority groups
- Benefits to local businesses through the use of the facilities for events / championships (eg, Junior State Championships) that would inject spending into the local area
- There are many hirers of the current pitch across other local sporting organisations and local schools that could be expanded further with a second pitch

### ***Major Concern 1: Current use of Ashwood Reserve North will be impacted***

Our members are regularly at Ashwood Reserve as evidenced with the actual data in the Feasibility Study. The view from WHC is that the grass area in “Ashwood Reserve North” is rarely used by other users. The main uses we do witness are:

- Irregular use by dog owners / social / family sporting activities
- Irregular use by the Victorian Sikh Association (VSA) for:
  - o Social soccer activity, predominantly in 1 x small format match and occasionally 2 x small format matches (supported by comments in the Feasibility study attributed directly to the VSA as discussed further below)
  - o Children playing / activities that spill from the current pavilion
  - o Occasional functions / activities for large groups (1-2 times per year)

WHC believe the latest plan provides a compromise by limiting the width of the hockey area to the bare minimum and maximising the grass area to the west. This results in a grass area of approximately 20m x 100m that will facilitate the current activity listed above.

Additionally, the small format social soccer activity or any larger format social soccer could also be played on the proposed synthetic pitch.

### ***Major Concern 2: A 2<sup>nd</sup> hockey pitch will worsen the car parking impacts at Ashwood Reserve***

There are currently 66 car spaces at Ashwood Reserve and the major hockey related car parking issues arise when WHC’s Premier League teams are playing home matches and we have a significant number of spectators in attendance.

If the 2<sup>nd</sup> ground goes ahead, there will be an increase of 49 car parks to 115 spaces under the current plan. Any hockey match on the second ground when Premier League are playing will be a minor league that does not attract spectators (we can write this requirement into an agreement with Hockey Victoria) and we could limit hiring to other parties at these times.

This means that the maximum number of cars for the match on the second ground would be expected to be less than the number of new car parks and the proposed plan will actually ease parking congestion.

The other occasions car parking limitations occur is when the VSA have a function in the North pavilion at the same time as a Premier League day. Although, given Premier League games are almost exclusively on a Saturday and the Feasibility study shows VSA use on a Saturday does not begin until 5:00pm, this should not be an issue.

***Victorian Sikh Association***

WHC has been supportive of the co-tenancy of the VSA at Ashwood Reserve including their initial move into the old pavilion at Ashwood Reserve (both clubs initially used the pavilion) and co-operating with the design of the new pavilion they now use which was approved without a feasibility study or community consultation process. At that time, WHC were assured the introduction of the new pavilion would not impact the progress towards a 2<sup>nd</sup> hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve.

The VSA were actively engaged during the Feasibility study for the 2<sup>nd</sup> hockey pitch. They provided detailed statistics on the purported use of the facilities and provided specific feedback on the proposal that was included in the Feasibility study through the following extracts:

- “The Sikh Association has been informed of the proposal to convert the grass field to a synthetic field. It is not opposed to the general concept. However, the Association wants to retain access to the pavilion and a grassed area in the Reserve that could be used for basic soccer training and informal soccer activities (not necessarily a full size field).”
- “The Association asked whether the synthetic field could be oriented east-west which would leave a grassed area to the north that could be for soccer.”

The Feasibility study outcomes are on the public record in the minutes to the City of Monash Council meeting on 10 December 2019 that state the next steps as:

- commence community consultation
- commence detailed site planning of the reserve
- prepare a further report for Council with integrated site planning and consultation findings.

The second item around detailed site planning took into account the VSA request to retain a grass area for “basic soccer training and informal soccer activities” that was not included in the plan at the time of the Feasibility study.

WHC remained in active correspondence with officers of City of Monash and independently obtained the information on public record in order to understand detailed planning and community consultation would occur. WHC also kept members up to date on this information at various opportunities. VSA had the same opportunity to remain up to date on the process and provide VSA members with relevant information.

As the requestors and beneficiaries of a 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch at Ashwood Reserve, WHC were asked for feedback from the City of Monash by early 2021 which was 2-3 months before the VSA were notified of the detailed plan in the community consultation period. We believe isolated engagement with WHC prior to the community consultation was appropriate as the major beneficiary and the party requesting the new facility. Potentially the VSA could have been engaged immediately after WHC’s feedback was considered and applied which would have resulted in VSA feedback around 1 month earlier than the current situation.

Based on the above information and timeline, WHC will be disappointed if the VSA attempt to delay the proposal going to Council for decision.

Please contact me if you would like any further information on WHC’s feedback.

Yours sincerely

Nikki Gerling

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## Appendix: Community Consultation – concerns raised

Association / Person	Concern / Requirement	Waverley Hockey Club (WHC) response
Local resident	I need the park to walk my dog / kick a ball with my kids / maintain green space	<p>The grass area in the proposed plan should be sufficient for these purposes. Particularly given members of WHC rarely see people casually using the area so it does not have a lot of patronage. If a larger area is required, there will still be significant grass areas a short walk away in the wider Ashwood, Jingella, Holmesglen Reserve Corridor.</p> <p>We appreciate the visual appearance of a synthetic surface may not be appealing for some people, but we believe the benefits outweigh the visual impact.</p>
Local resident	A 2nd hockey pitch will worsen the car parking impacts at Ashwood Reserve	<p>The development will actually ease parking congestion in the area as the new plan nearly doubles the number of car spaces and additional usage on the busiest days is expected to be low.</p> <p>The major concern is on Premier League (PL) match days when up to 300 spectators are in attendance. If the second ground goes ahead, on days with a PL match day on the main ground any match on the second ground will be a minor league that does not attract spectators (we can write this requirement into an agreement with Hockey Victoria if required). This means that the maximum number of cars for the match on the second ground would be expected to be less than the number of new car parks, easing the parking congestion rather than making it worse.</p> <p>Per the feasibility study, “angle parking could also replace the parallel parking along the west side of Winbirra Pde, if it was found, in the future, that more parking was needed.”</p>
Local resident	The lights and noise from the field keep me awake	<p>We use the ground to the maximum allowed times at the moment due to the limited availability. If anything, the use of the second pitch will reduce the amount of time spent on the pitch/es rather than increase it so this should reduce the impact. The recent introduction of new lights on the current pitch that will be replicated on a 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch also result in lower light spill outside of the venue and the houses on Winbirra Parade are all higher than the proposed pitch height.</p>
VSA	Traffic/parking issues	<p>WHC were the original tenant at Ashwood Reserve. The VSA sporadically used an old pavilion for a number of years until 2015 when the new pavilion was built. They are now at the new pavilion on more occasions than previously. They did not see a problem with parking during planning for their new pavilion in 2015.</p> <p>Also, based on the Feasibility study, the VSA usage of the pavilion begins at 5:00pm on a Saturday which is after WHC’s Premier League matches finish so the impact should be minimised.</p>

VSA	The grass area is currently used for soccer and we can't lose that facility	<p>The 2 main VSA soccer teams do not train or play their regular matches at Ashwood Reserve. Therefore, Ashwood Reserve is used by VSA for social soccer. This social activity is almost exclusively within a small space that could still be accommodated on the grass area in the proposed plan. The synthetic pitch could also be used for soccer as well. The grass area is very close in size to 2 x quarters of a hockey field. WHC has a lot of high level training and junior matches across quarter field areas which provides our basis for believing VSA's social soccer can usually occur in that type of space.</p> <p>The grass area is also bigger than 2 x futsal courts (indoor soccer) that are 20m x 40m each. If required, could the project include an extension of a synthetic futsal court to ease the impact on the VSA while retaining approximately 20m x 60m of grassed area (with a contribution from VSA)?</p>
VSA	We can't play soccer on a hockey pitch because we can't wear our usual boots on the pitch	<p>We understand financial difficulty is a common occurrence in our community. We are willing to discuss options to obtain appropriate footwear for people that meet financial hardship conditions to eliminate this issue for relevant Sikh members. For example, this may be through donation of WHC member shoes to members of the Sikh community.</p> <p>We do not see this as a significant barrier for people who are not in a financial hardship position.</p>
VSA	Hockey is a dying sport and soccer is the future so why do we need a second hockey pitch? The grass area should have lights installed for VSA use	There are already 25 soccer pitches in the City of Monash. As a rough guide, there are 543,159 outdoor affiliated participants in soccer per the Football Australia 2019 national participation report and 125,000 registered hockey players based on the Hockey Australia website (with higher proportion of female participation). This is a 4:1 ratio. Yet, the current ratio of soccer to hockey pitches in Monash is 25:1. Even with a second pitch at Ashwood Reserve, the ratio is still well in favour of soccer.
VSA	The grass area is used for functions and the new hockey pitch will destroy this opportunity	We are not aware of any functions VSA hold currently that would not fit in a 20m x 100m stretch of grass and/or by using the synthetic pitch. Social media photos and physical evidence WHC members have witnessed lead us to believe the majority, if not all, current VSA activities could continue at Ashwood Reserve with some slight modification that would not impact the outcome of the event. This includes the junior soccer tournament from Easter 2021 that could occur through some matches on the grass area and some on the synthetic pitch (the grass ground was split into smaller pitches during that event). (Note the discussion on footwear highlighted above).
VSA	The VSA has built a home at Ashwood Reserve and nothing should be changed	WHC were the original tenants at Ashwood Reserve in the mid 1980s. The grass pitches were initially used for hockey along with the synthetic pitch with a view right from the beginning to convert the grass area into a further synthetic pitch in the future. WHC cannot currently operate in a manner that is appropriate for our members. We believe there is very little impact of a second hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve on the VSA community, as outlined in the other responses here.

VSA	We provide economic and cultural benefits to the City of Monash through our activities (eg, 1,000+ people at Easter event)	<p>WHC respects the Sikh community and supports the VSA's strong passion and history to bring people of their community together. However, it is one culture and the members of the Sikh community that use the grass area are almost exclusively men except for 1 or 2 days a year where boys and girls participate in sporting activity. In contrast, WHC is a multi-cultural and gender diverse club that also supports the Monash community with over 200 current <i>playing</i> members living in the municipality (before counting all of their family members). Many other hockey players also come to Waverley to play during the year and contribute to the Monash community.</p> <p>A second pitch would enhance this benefit and provide additional opportunities for WHC to engage with the local community (eg, more programs like our recent free Women Hitting It uP (WHIP) program for women of all ages and abilities) and additional hiring opportunities to local sporting organisations (including VSA's hockey team/s) and local schools.</p>
VSA	The clubhouse has been integral to many significant decisions for the Victorian, Australian and Global Sikh communities. If you put a second synthetic pitch down, it will ruin future opportunities	The clubhouse will remain and WHC are supportive of the continued use by the VSA. This means that the comment is not relevant to the proposal.
City of Monash	The pitch needs to be suitable for VSA soccer and hockey	As discussed above, the VSA soccer at Ashwood Reserve is social so there are no official requirements. We believe a sand-filled hockey pitch is appropriate for social soccer. (Note the discussion on footwear highlighted above).