

VC: GR

5 October 2010

Dear Councillor/Sir/Madam

You are invited to attend an **ASHFIELD ACCESS COMMITTEE** of Ashfield Council, to be held at the Pratten Park Tennis Club, 40 Arthur Street, Ashfield on **MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2010** at **12:00PM (NOON)**.

Yours faithfully

VANESSA CHAN  
General Manager

**SEE ATTACHED AGENDA**

## **ASHFIELD ACCESS COMMITTEE - 11/10/2010**

### **AGENDA**

- 1. OPENING**
- 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY**
- 3. APOLOGIES/REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Disclosures to be made by any Councillors who have a pecuniary / non-pecuniary interest in respect of matters that are before Council at this meeting.  
(11/10/2010)

- 5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEES**

**ASHFIELD ACCESS COMMITTEE - 6/09/2010**

- 6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 6.1 Discussion Paper - Council Recreation Strategy (copy Attached)
- 6.2 Village Access Project Haberfield – update
- 6.3 RTA Pedestrian Safety Project – update
- 6.4 Business Use of Public Footpath - community consultation update

- 7. CLOSE**

## Discussion Paper

### **Developing an Ashfield Council Recreation Plan**

#### **Community profile**

The Municipality of Ashfield is in the Inner West of Sydney, is 8.29 square kilometres in size and includes the suburbs of Ashfield, Summer Hill and Haberfield, the eastern part of Croydon and the fringes of Croydon Park, Hurlstone Park and Ashbury. The population density is relatively high with 4,825 people per square kilometre and 47% of the population living in units, flats or apartments.

The area is transgressed by three major arterial roadways, Parramatta Road, Liverpool Road and the City West Link. The public transport system in the area is serviced by Sydney Buses and the Inner West railway line.

With a population of 39,667 (ABS Census: 2006) Ashfield is one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in the Sydney Metropolitan area with 42.6% of the population born overseas. Over a third of those born overseas were born in a non-English speaking country with the main birthplace countries being China, India and Philippines.

The 2006 Census data indicates that almost 30% of the Ashfield LGA population is aged over 50 years of age and 11% over 70 years of age with 18.4% of the population aged 0-17 years of age.

#### **What do these demographics tell us?**

They tell us that there are a lot of people from different ethnic backgrounds living in a small geographical area. As it happens, most of these people are living in units, flats or apartments that do not offer a lot of private open space. This high population density and multicultural mix does come with challenges for Council. However all of those backgrounds, languages and cultures can be utilised as an invaluable resource to guide Council toward the development of an LGA that is aesthetically pleasing, offers a range of opportunities, has responded to community aspirations and is full of life.

Clearly, from the statistics provided, there are a significant number of local people who are currently aged or middle-aged and preparing for their later years. The trend toward healthy lifestyle recreation is well embraced by this older age group and Council will need to respond to this with improved access to recreational opportunities.

In terms of health and well-being, the fact that the locality is transgressed by three major arterial roads, presents challenges for residents who wish to pursue recreational walking or cycling.

#### **Why does Council need a Recreation strategy?**

As a Local Government Authority, Ashfield Council is responsible for good governance, to look after the needs of the local community and is primarily responsible for the management of recreation areas in the municipality.

Recreational aspirations were clearly expressed in recent community consultations undertaken for the development of the Ashfield Council Social Plan 2010 and the Ashfield Council 10 year Strategic Plan.

The cultural diversity of the area calls upon Council to respond to emerging and changing needs in recreation. Barriers to Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) participation is varied but can be lessened with informed decisions that have considered CALD attitude and interest, cultural sensitivities and gender.

There are also many health-related reasons why Council should strive to encourage a high level of citizen participation in recreation and leisure activities. For example, the National falls prevention strategy links regular physical activity to improved balance and physical strength which can help significantly in the reduction of falls related injury. Falls are common enough but for an older person can lead to medical complications and physical deterioration, reduced independence and the risk of social isolation.

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions nationally and globally and it is estimated that 60% of the adult Australian population and 25% of Australian children are overweight or obese. According to the National Preventative Health Taskforce, sedentary lifestyle and physical inactivity are two of the main risk factors attributed to a person being overweight or obese. Obesity is clearly linked to increased rates of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Responsible urban planning can encourage people to improve and increase their levels of physical activity. This can be achieved with the development of supportive and sustainable environments with consideration to equitable access for all ages and abilities. Supportive environments will encourage participation in passive and active recreation and will offer pedestrian and cycle ways as transport options. Safe accessible environments can promote an increase in physical activity, encourage social engagement and facilitate an increase in social capital. This is particularly relevant as the high population density and the transgression of three major arterial roads have implications for pedestrian safety and safe and accessible paths of travel throughout the municipality. Mobility can be hazardous due to these issues, particularly for the elderly.

The ABS report, *Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation, Australia, 2005–06*, identified constraints to participation in sports or physical recreation. Some of these were insufficient time because of work or study commitments, lack of interest, age/too old, on-going injury or illness and insufficient time due to family commitments. On the other hand, reasons cited that motivate participation are health and fitness, as well as enjoyment and social or family reasons.

Ashfield Council can play a pivotal role in meeting the recreation needs of the community and it is proposed that a Council staff working party be formed to develop a Recreation Strategy that promotes our facilities, promotes local leisure and sporting groups and improves community participation in recreation generally.

## **What are the existing local recreation resources that Council currently oversees?**

They include:

- Sports grounds used for cricket in summer and football in winter
- Lawn and synthetic tennis courts,
- The Ashfield Aquatic Centre that has indoor and outdoor pools and a water polo pool,
- Lawn bowl facilities,
- A skate park for teenagers
- Basketball courts
- Netball courts
- Children's playgrounds
- BBQ's & picnic areas
- Rest areas and gardens
- Off leash dog area
- A section of the Bay Walk
- A range of small parks & reserves
- Community meeting rooms and halls
- Civic Centre facilities including performing arts venue
- Thirning Villa arts hub
- Two libraries
- BicyclePaths

## **What are some of the existing Council initiatives & plans which relate to recreational planning?**

These include:

The Ashfield Local Street Bike Plan  
Cooks River to Iron Cove Greenway section of the Inner West Bike Map project, an initiative of the Hawthorne Canal Active Transport (HCAT)  
Pratten Park Plan of Management  
Ashfield Park, Plan of Management  
Hammond Park Plan of Management (draft)  
Centenary Park Plan of Management (draft)  
Small Parks and General Community Use, Plan of Management  
Section 94A Plan  
Ashfield LEP  
Asset Management Plans: Playspaces and Sporting fields; Public Toilets and Sports Amenities; Bike Plan 2010

Where are the gaps in the provision of Recreation services & facilities?

to begin to identify gaps in recreational services, three questions are posed & they are:

- is council responding effectively to our local communities?
- are our existing assets meeting demand/needs?
- are there sporting/recreational pursuits that miss out completely?

over 42% of the ashfield population was born overseas and a third of those were born in a non english speaking country. future planning and programming must embrace this cultural diversity and be specific and sensitive to the values and traditions of the identified and emerging diverse communities. there are many ways to achieve an optimum result in this area, including engagement of community leaders, partnerships between council and government and non-government organisations

following discussions with council officers it is evident that there is a high demand on existing sporting grounds and fields for seasonal use by sports organisations and schools. this is compounded by demand from out of area.

as a large number of residents live in flats, units or apartments, outdoor areas and bbq's are increasingly used as gathering places for family activities. existing facilities are highly used, and there has been conflict between users in ashfield park as a result of the limited resources.

Some of the sports or recreational activities that miss out include:

- Badminton
- Diving
- Hockey
- Volleyball
- Bocce
- Snooker
- Golf
- Table tennis
- Non-commercial exhibition space for visual arts

## **Priorities and a way forward**

Examples of possible future directions are:

1. The development of key partnerships with funding bodies and neighbouring Councils.
2. The development and enhancement of existing open space.
3. The ongoing identification of new open space opportunities. This would include the Town Centre area.

Having said this, it is not the purpose of this short paper to identify future priorities in detail. Rather it is suggested that these will be identified by a proposed Recreation Plan staff working group who would also scope the time-frames & responsibilities.