

## 16.8. OUTDOOR SPORTS COURT STRATEGY & SPORTS LIGHTING PLAN

### REPORT INFORMATION

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Date of Meeting	7 February 2024
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### SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report presents the final MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the final MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 for adoption.

### RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 (provided in Attachment 1) be adopted; and
2. The MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 (provided in Attachment 2) be adopted.

### FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The public exhibition process for the Draft MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the draft MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 had minimal financial implications for Council other than those required to promote the engagement process to the community and stakeholders.

The actions identified in the Strategy and Plan will have long-term financial implications for Council and where financial impacts are anticipated these have been identified in the documents, along with their anticipated sources of funding which not from Council.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no anticipated legal implications from the adoption of the MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035.

### RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified risks associated with the activity.

### BACKGROUND

Council provides and maintains a great variety of open spaces and recreation facilities to cater for the recreational and play pursuits of our community. Council's commitment to the community is to protect our natural environment whilst providing affordable recreation and play opportunities through the provision of high-quality infrastructure that will increase participation and enhance the physical activity undertaken by the community.

Council is also committed to the sustainable management of MidCoast's open spaces. Both environmental and cultural character and values are protected within our open spaces. Council acknowledges the value that traditional owners bring to our natural environments and is committed to promoting and protecting traditional owner engagement and values.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council manages more than 4100 ha of public open space, made up of 826 different parks and reserves, 217 of which are crown land reserves which we manage on behalf of the State. Within these parks and reserves there are 45 sports field facilities, containing 81 individual sports fields. In addition, Council manages numerous other specialist sports facilities, such as multi-purpose courts, tennis courts, basketball courts, skateparks, BMX tracks and 79 playspaces.

These facilities are a significant investment by MidCoast Council on behalf of the community, both in the initial capital investment to install them, but more importantly, the ongoing investment in maintenance and replacement. We therefore need a clear planning mechanism that provides an evidence-based framework that guides the provision of these facilities.

Council adopted the Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2023 – 2035 (OSRS) in July 2023. The OSRS is one of the most important planning strategies produced by Council. The previous Councils that made up the new MidCoast Council all had some form of planning document for their open space, however, since amalgamation Council has been managing our public open spaces without strategic planning documents that provide direction for those spaces or the activities that are undertaken in them. The OSRS and its supporting strategies give us that direction.

The MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 are critical components of the open space and recreation planning portfolio. These two documents are based on the vision and guiding principles of the OSRS.

## **CONSULTATION**

Council has undertaken more than two years of ongoing community engagement around our parks and recreation areas and the activities that our community does in them. The focus of the OSRS was on delivering community outcomes through the facilities that we provide in our parks. The community has told us consistently that they want high value contemporary facilities.

During 2023 we conducted eight separate engagement processes for our planning documents. Starting with the Open Space and Recreation Needs Analysis, and then the draft OSRS, and then both the Play and Skate strategies. Finally, we have sought the community's feedback on the MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035. Therefore, the level of community input into this extensive planning process is significant, and our confidence is high that we have a clear understanding of what the community wants for our parks and reserves, and the activities that we do in them.

During the period 30 October – 3 December 2023 the Draft MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the draft MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 were placed on public exhibition. During this period a Have Your Say webpage was active, which included a brief survey. The main mechanism for providing feedback was by completing a formal submission.

### **Feedback**

During the public exhibition period we received 41 formal submissions from the community for the Outdoor Sports Court Strategy, and 23 formal submissions from the community for the Sports Lighting Plan. These submissions were mainly location based; in that they are specific to the location that the person lives in. There were no submissions about the documents themselves, but rather the individual actions in the respective Action Plans, or actions that the submitter wanted to put into the Action Plans.

The table below sets out the themes from the feedback. Our response and how the individual strategies deal with these themes is also included.

Attachments 3 & 4 present a brief description of each of the individual submissions, commentary about the requests, and any changes made to the respective strategies because of the submission. All individual submissions have been provided in Attachments 5 & 6.

Serial	Theme of submission/s	Response
1	<p>Tennis</p> <p>The majority of submissions were for the small rural tennis facilities, from members of the community that did not want them removed.</p> <p>Included in their points is that the facilities have been maintained by the community through grants.</p>	<p>Due to the large number of submissions for these facilities their value to their respective communities has been demonstrated.</p> <p>The recommendations to remove these facilities has been changed to consider the viability of each facility at the end of the facility life. This will allow Council to engage with the community when significant funds need to be invested, and if the usage is demonstrated then decisions can be made based on current use.</p> <p>The strategy also notes that if local community groups are obtaining grants to maintain facilities, thus removing the burden from Council to maintain the more than 90 tennis courts that we have, then those facilities supported by grant funding do not represent a financial burden for Council and the wider community and they can remain operational.</p> <p>However, relying on the community to obtain grants to maintain community facilities cannot be a long-term strategy for Council. We need a mechanism to ensure that the viability of a facility is considered against its ongoing cost to the community.</p>
2	<p>Sports Lighting</p> <p>Diamond Beach Sports Field.</p> <p>There were many submissions about the Sports Lighting Plan not recommending the installation of sports lighting at the facility.</p>	<p>The OSRS recommends the installation of sports lighting at Diamond Beach Sports Field as a medium-term priority. This recommendation was based on community feedback, and the requirement to gauge the impact of the future Hallidays Point Sports Complex.</p> <p>The Sports Lighting Plan developed an evidenced based approach to the individual actions, including at Diamond Beach. It is felt that</p>

Serial	Theme of submission/s	Response
		<p>the installation of sports lighting at the Black Head Sports Complex, as well as the future Hallidays Point Sports Complex should necessitate an analysis of use before additional sports lighting is provided at Diamond Beach. It is anticipated that these two facilities should meet the future Hallidays Point need for lit sports fields.</p> <p>The recommendation has been adjusted to indicate that an analysis of need will be conducted, as a medium-term priority, and if the need is justified then sports lighting will be installed at the Diamond Beach facility.</p>

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and the MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035 will give the community confidence that their valued public open spaces are being managed with a future focus.

## ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN

The MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023 – 2035 and MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023 – 2035, as part of the larger planning portfolio align with the following objectives of MidCoast Council's Community Strategic Plan:

**Community Outcome 1:** A resilient and socially connected community.

Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities for everyone; they are safe and are places where we work together with a creative focus acknowledging our rich history and culture.

1.2 We have access to a wide range of services and activities that contribute to the wellbeing of all members of our community.

1.4 We protect the health and safety of our communities.

**Community Outcome 2:** An integrated and considered approach to managing our natural and built environments.

Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing town centres and manage our resources wisely.

2.1 We protect, manage and restore our natural environment and our biodiversity.

2.2 We understand and manage environment and climate change risks and impacts.

2.5 We balance the needs of our natural and built environment.

## LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments are available on the meeting page of Council's website under the 'Attachments to Agenda' heading. The copies of Attachments 3, 4,5 & 6 on the website have had

the personal information redacted to protect the privacy of the members of the public providing the submissions:

Attachment 1 - MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023-2035 (62 pages)

Attachment 2 - MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023-2035 (49 pages)

Attachment 3 - MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy - Feedback & Change Register (26 pages)

Attachment 4 - MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan - Feedback & Change Register (8 pages)

Attachment 5 - MidCoast Outdoor Sports Court Strategy 2023-2035 – Submissions (97 pages)

Attachment 6 - MidCoast Sports Lighting Plan 2023-2035 – Submissions (79 pages)

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