

# Varty Park

## Plan of Management



January 2007

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## **Introduction**

This plan of management has been prepared by Cessnock City Council for Varty Park in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993.

This plan of management is an important document providing a clear framework for the future management of land in the care and control of Council. This plan will enable Cessnock City Council to produce a consistent and effective set of guidelines which will govern the management of its community land.

The Local Government Act, 1993 states that community land is land that is reserved for community use. The Act also states that councils must categorise all community land according to its function. The community land covered by this plan is categorised as Sportsground. The core objectives of community land categorised as Sportsground are:

- (a) To encourage, promote and facilitate recreational pursuits in the community involving organised and informal sporting activities and games, and;
- (b) To ensure that such activities are managed having regard to any adverse impact on nearby residences.

This Plan of Management will be reviewed quarterly and annually during the budget process to assess implementation and performance, and fully reviewed after five years to allow policy and planning issues to be updated.

# Figure 1: Site Plan

## VARTY PARK



Owners Information :

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Cessnock City Council (C)  
C/- Property Officer  
PO Box 152  
CESSNOCK NSW 2325

Property Information :

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Address : 0 Cessnock RD, WESTON  
Authority ParcelID : 9691  
Title : PT: 260 DP: 755231  
Area : 114793.03 sq m  
Perimeter : 1438.87 m  
Council Type : Community  
Title Description : Council Owned Land  
Property Description: Varty Park  
Legal Docs:  
Assessment No. : 163196

Postal Address :

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Cessnock City Council (C)  
C/- Property Officer  
PO Box 152  
CESSNOCK NSW 2325

## Objectives

The key objectives which give direction to this plan are:

- To plan for the continual development and maintenance of recreational resources within Varty Park to a high standard for the convenience and well being of users;
- To plan for progressive improvement of the quality and appearance of parks, playgrounds and sportsgrounds as funds become available;
- To encourage and support the hosting of local, regional, state and national sporting events at Varty Park;
- To facilitate the effective, equitable and efficient management of the land within Varty Park;
- To provide a broad spectrum of safe, high quality recreational opportunities at Varty Park;
- To distribute future recreational resources as community demand and financial viability dictates in regards to Varty Park;
- To maintain clear communication channels with stakeholders, the public and nearby residences;
- To make provision for the sale of undesirable open-space areas, leases, licences and agreements in respect of the utilisation of council's recreational assets; and
- To make provision for licence agreements for periods up to 21 years in respect of the utilisation of Councils recreational assets.

## **Background**

Varty Park is a recreation facility which caters for a number of sporting and community groups. Varty Park is within close proximity to Chinamans Hollow/Peace Park which is considered an advanced facility within the Cessnock LGA.

The proposed relocation of the Weston Junior Soccer Club to an alternate location highlighted the need for a Plan of Management for Varty Park to be updated to assess the current and future needs of the site.

## **The Physical Setting**

Varty Park is located in Weston. Vehicular access to the site is via Swanson Street with pedestrian access provided through Chinamans Hollow and Fourth Street. Varty Park consists of 11.47 hectares of land which is owned by Cessnock City Council and comprises the following parcel of land - 0 Cessnock Road, DP755231.

Also of importance in relation to its physical setting is that Varty Park is susceptible to a high degree of vandalism. This is often attributed to the facilities location, in that it is not highly visible.

## **Buildings and Facilities**

The site contains a number of facilities including two (2) soccer fields, a combined use field, a dog off leash area and an area for passive recreation. Each of these facilities will be analysed individually to present a more detailed overview.

### **Soccer fields**

There are two (2) senior soccer fields situated in the north eastern portion of the park. The fields are surrounded by weld mesh fencing. An irrigation line runs between the two (2) fields. Aluminium bench seating is provided on the western side of the fields closest to the amenity building. The fields are well grassed and in relatively good condition.

### **Combined use field**

A combined use field is located in the north western portion of Varty Park. A concrete cricket wicket is situated in the middle of the field. The ground is heavily accessed by motorcycles and vehicles and is in poor condition. The field does not contain irrigation and restoration works are required on the spectator mound to prevent clay from washing onto the field in wet conditions. In addition the soil in the area contains a high proportion of sand which causes problems with grass coverage. The southern end of the field is enclosed with vegetation and the field is fenced on the northern and eastern sides with weld mesh. A vehicular access gate is provided on the northern end of the site. Pedestrian access ways are also provided on the northern and eastern sides of the field.

### **Amenities Block**

An amenity building is positioned at Varty Park central to all facilities. Vandalism at this site is evident through security measures on the amenity building including bars in front of the kiosk and on all of the windows. The amenity building contains two (2) changerooms, a male and female toilet as well as a kiosk.

### **Dog Off Leash Exercise Area**

A dog off leash exercise area was established at Varty Park in 2006. This area is located at the south eastern portion of the site and is elevated. The off leash area is signposted and outlines conditions of use. To improve the operation of the area a water point is provided as well as a dog bin for the disposal of dog faeces.

### **Surrounding Grounds**

Security fencing surrounds the perimeter of the sportsground which minimises trespassing.

### **Car parking**

Ample car parking is provided on site however it is informal, with cars parking on grassed areas and on the dirt roadway.

## **Land Use and Activity**

Varty Park is a recreation facility that caters for a number of sports and community events. This site has directly benefited sporting and community groups and residents within the Cessnock LGA.

The fields located within Varty Park are utilised on an annual basis by a number of sports including soccer and cricket. Activities these sporting groups undertake include club competition and training.

The sporting facilities within Varty Park are utilised by local primary and high schools for school sport and competitions.

The facilities within Varty Park are also used by the general community. The grounds are used for passive recreation use such as walking and running.

Varty Park is also utilised as a leash free area where people can exercise their dogs without the constraints of a leash.

## **Maintenance of Facilities**

There are no current lease or licence agreements pertaining to the sportsfields within Varty Park. Cessnock Council is therefore responsible for all maintenance duties at this site which include:

- Mowing of all grassed areas within the boundary of the premises;
- Line marking – Council line marks playing fields once a year. Clubs are responsible for any additional line marking;
- Maintenance of all fences and barriers;
- Maintenance of seating;
- Maintenance of irrigation, Drainage; and
- Floodlighting

Cessnock City Council is responsible for the maintenance of the passive recreation areas as well as the dog off leash exercise area situated in Varty Park. Maintenance responsibilities are the same as above.

This plan of management authorises the granting of easements where the Council decides it is necessary to do so.

In addition this plan of management authorises the granting of leases and licences or delegation of management of the land for purposes consistent with the goals, issues and objectives included in the plan. Leases and licences may be for periods up to 21 years, subject to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.

## **Future Land Use**

Should the Weston Junior Soccer Club and affiliated teams relocate to another location, this would provide an opportunity to reclassify a portion of Varty Park (soccer fields located in the north Eastern portion) to operational land. The rezoning of this land will allow for residential development at a later stage.

The cricket field located in the north western portion of the park will be maintained and will be continued to be utilised for sporting and community events.

Future plans for the use of the facilities within Varty Park are varied. Future short term casual uses include:

- Food Vending
- Busking and Entertainment
- Sale of Alcohol
- Community and Private events
- Filming
- Use of buildings

Fees may be charged for the use of Varty Park, which will be dependant on the type of use. These fees will be determined by Council.

## **Management of the Land**

The objective and performance targets below provide the framework for the management of Varty Park. The objective and performance targets listed are consistent with anticipated availability of resources.

The priorities in this implementation plan have been determined through community consultation and recreation planning data and are subject to the availability of resources.

This action plan will be reviewed annually and adjustments made in conjunction with the annual estimates process.

The key objectives which were cited in the introduction are revisited to illustrate what each strategy is aiming to achieve.

- To plan for the continual development and maintenance of recreational resources to a high standard for the convenience and well being of users;
- To plan for progressive improvement of the quality and appearance of parks, playgrounds and sportsgrounds as funds become available;
- To encourage and support the hosting of local, regional, state and national sporting events;
- To facilitate the effective, equitable and efficient management of the land within;
- To provide a broad spectrum of safe, high quality recreational opportunities;
- To distribute future recreational resources as community demand and financial viability dictates;
- To maintain clear communication channels with stakeholders, the public and nearby residences;

- To make provision for the sale of undesirable open-space areas, leases, licences and agreements in respect of the utilisation of council's recreational assets; and
- To make provision for licence agreements for periods up to 21 years in respect of the utilisation of Councils recreational assets.

## Implementation Action Plan

Management Issues	Objective and Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Objective and Performance Targets	Assessment of Performance in Relation to Objectives and Performance Targets
<b>Recreation Resources</b>	To continually enhance and develop the buildings located at the site as resources become available.	The existing amenities building is demolished and relocated towards the southern end of the Park.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community and key user groups.
		Buildings are enhanced and/or developed as required, based on their current condition.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community and key user groups regarding buildings.
	To continually enhance and develop the facilities at the site as resources become available.	The main cricket oval will be renovated providing a turf cricket wicket	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community and key user groups regarding turf cricket wicket.
		Irrigation is installed on the cricket oval.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community and key user groups regarding irrigation.
		Floodlights will be positioned around the main cricket oval.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community and key user groups regarding floodlights.
		Make provision for the sale of excess open space and subsequent reclassification of land.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community regarding reclassification of land.
		Facilities are improved as required, based on their current condition.	Council recommendations. Feedback received from the community regarding facilities.
<b>Community Competitions and Events</b>	Encourage, organise and administer sporting and community events.	Allocation of recreational resources for sporting and community events to occur on a regular basis.	Records of frequency & types of events to be kept as well as attendance figures.
	Promote sporting and community events through respective local, state and regional areas.	Events are recognised in media releases, advertisements and other forms of promotional material.	Level of media coverage and general awareness of events.

Management Issues	Objective and Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Objective and Performance Targets	Assessment of Performance in Relation to Objectives and Performance Targets
<b>Partnerships with Stakeholders</b>	Facilitate regular contact with stakeholders, such as key users, i.e. soccer club, cricket club and dog walkers.	Quarterly meetings are held with key stakeholders.	Minutes from meetings are recorded and acted upon.
		Contact details are kept up to date and contact is made as needed.	Assessed through Councils internal Customer Request Management System.
	Where necessary, any queries, requests or complaints are passed on.	Queries, requests and complaints are recorded and referred to the relevant party in a timely manner.	Complaints and requests are recorded via Councils internal Customer Request Management System, and acted on in a timely manner.
	Provide financial reports for activities occurring in regard to the land.	Reports are available and provided when requested, e.g. licence agreement requirements, grant applications.	Information provided within financial reports.
<b>Providing Support and Advice to Community Groups</b>	Identify and communicate funding opportunities available to the sporting clubs and community groups.	Organisations are notified of Dollar for Dollar grant opportunities as well as other funding initiatives operating within Council.	Number of grants applied for by community groups. Level of support from Council with preparation of grants.
		Organisations are notified of all government department grants that are available. E.g. The Regional Sports Facilities Program as well as the Capital Assistance Program which are provided by the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation.	Number of grants applied for by community groups. Level of support from Council with preparation of grants.

Management Issues	Objective and Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Objective and Performance Targets	Assessment of Performance in Relation to Objectives and Performance Targets
<b>Providing Support and Advice to Community Groups</b> (Continued)	Provide professional advice with regard to development concepts /designs and management issues.	Council maintains continual contact with local sporting clubs. When requested, Council provides accurate and prompt advice. Where appropriate Council may instigate a project.	Minutes from meetings are distributed and acted on.
	Where possible, provide funding support for developments and improvements made to Varty Park.	Appropriate projects are added to Capital Works Program and Planned Maintenance Program, or alternate sources identified.	Amount of funding provided from Council or alternate source. Completion of project in a timely manner.
<b>Informal/Social Recreation</b>	To encourage, promote and facilitate recreational pursuits in the community involving organised and informal sporting activities and games.	Varty Park provides areas where sporting activities and organised games can be conducted.	Number of activities and games provided on an annual basis.
	To encourage, promote and facilitate recreational, cultural, social and educational pastimes and activities.	Allocation of Varty Park for this type of use. Varty Park provides areas where recreational, cultural, social and educational pastimes and activities can be held.	Number of patrons attending organised events, number of people utilising passive park areas. Diversity of events.
	To provide for passive recreational activities or pastimes and for the casual playing of games.	Open space area provided within Varty Park.	Number of patrons attending organised events, number of people utilising passive park areas.
	Maximise availability for passive recreational use within Varty Park.	Promote use of Varty Park outside peak sporting use. Limit organised activities in passive recreation areas.	Ongoing promotion of area by Council. Data is available on attendance figures.

Management Issues	Objective and Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Objective and Performance Targets	Assessment of Performance in Relation to Objectives and Performance Targets
<b>Communication</b>	Ensure that activities and events are managed having regard to any adverse impact on nearby residences.	Sporting Clubs, Community Clubs and Council Develop and adopt consultation protocols.	Feedback is reviewed via Councils Internal Customer Request Management System.
	Provide advance notice to nearby residents of any events/activities that may produce excessive noise or traffic congestion.	Nearby residents receive notice (verbal or written) of any such events/activities at least two days prior to the event taking place.	Feedback received from community regarding proposed events.
	Offer opportunities for residents to provide feedback in regard to the management of Varty Park.	Residents are provided with Club and Council details.	Level of feedback received from community regarding management of Varty Park.
<b>Licence Agreements</b>	Ensure that all lease and licence agreements pertaining to Varty Park are current.	Review, assess and renegotiate lease and licence agreements as they expire.	Lease agreements are reviewed as required.
	Ensure all lease and licence agreements are consistent with the core objectives for management of community land categorised as Sportsground.	Relevant legislation regarding lease and licence agreements is readily available when negotiating new lease and licence agreements.	Plans of Management are reviewed as required.

Management Issues	Objective and Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Objective and Performance Targets	Assessment of Performance in Relation to Objectives and Performance Targets
<b>Licence Agreements</b> (Continued)	Provide facilities on the land to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public. In relation to purposes for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land.	Negotiate leases, licences and estates as required.	Implement leases, licences and estates as required.
	To make provision for lease and licence agreements where appropriate.	Licences are reviewed upon expiry and provision for 21 year licence is made by application to the Minister for Planning where appropriate.	Feedback received from Minister for Planning.
<b>Future Needs</b>	Provide facilities on the land to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public. In relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public	Varty Park is recognised in Councils Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan.	The Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan is reviewed every five years.